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COMIC World

JANUARY 1993

ISSUE NO 11

STAR WARS
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...WHICH IS JUST THE WAY I'D HOPED IT WOULD WORK OUT WHEN I SHOT DADDY FROM THE FRONT BEDROOM WINDOW WITH THE GUN I KNEW WAS IN THE NIGHT TABLE AND WENT DOWNSTAIRS AND PUT THE GUN IN MOMMY'S HAND AND STARTED THE CRYING ACT...
THE END

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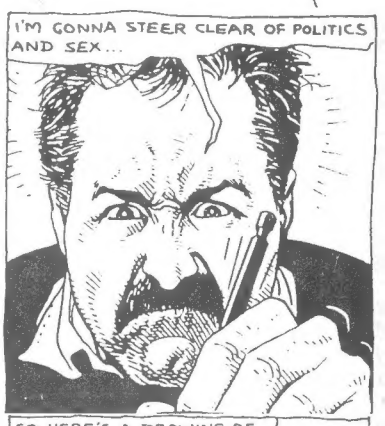

Cover: *Star Wars* by Dave Dorman. Soon to return to our screens in a new trilogy of films – see our *Star Wars* section for news! *Star Wars* and all characters are copyright LucasFilms. Many thanks to all at Dark Horse International for help above and beyond the call of duty.

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After last months editorial ramblings on the subject of censorship I want to use the space this month to clear up a few loose ends that have been hanging around for a while.

First of all our second batch of free subscription winners for people who sent in the questionnaire we handed out at UKCAC have been picked out of the waste paper bin (a special clean one kept for just such occasions). Stand up and take a bow: Stephen Jewell, Richard Watts, Laurence Hallam, A. Williams and Ashley Sanders. We've taken into account many of your requests for features and you'll find in this very issue a new feature which will cover all manner of comics-related subjects; this time we've a review of the Manga festival, for instance, and in forthcoming issues we'll have news of films, books, videos, computer games, etc., etc. If there's anything you think we should be covering there are two ways of doing it: either fill in the readers questionnaire in this issue (we want to give everyone a chance!), or you can always just write in and tell us!

Next up: the Marvel T-Shirt winners from issue 8: Marvel donated 20 t-shirts and I've got to say a big big thank you to Fiona for all her help in sorting things out for us. You want to know the winners? OK: James Pope, Ciaran McGrath, Alan Maxwell, Brian C. Duddy, Peter Dight, R. Gray, Peter Hodgson, Dan L. Silver, Laurence Watterson, Ross Skinner, Paul Wearne, W.J. Collins, Stuart Bullard, Iain McCaughey, Neil Cook, Alex Edwards, Flip Roncone, Mark Paul Clarke, Liam Astley, Martin Cutbill.

If you're name isn't one of the above, don't fret because you've got more chances to win prizes this issue. Fast forward to page 20 or 43 if that's what your here for. We've got to thank Pandora and Island World Communications for their wonderful offer of vids. But before you send in your answers remember: you've gotta fill in your age *or I get into trouble. And write your names and addresses* clearly.

You're holding issue 11 in your hands now, which means that next issue brings our first year to a close. We're planning some mega-special features for the next couple of months: we've interviews with Neil Gaiman and John Romita Jr., features on the Iron Man and X-Men anniversaries, Vertigo, the new Atomeka imprint, the new 2000AD *and that's just for starters. Who knows what we'll be getting up to after that.*

For once in my life I'm going to shut up and let you get on with this issue. Read and enjoy. We'll be back in thirty days with more of comics' finest talents. That leaves me with enough space to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you in '93.

..RAID LATEST...RAID

The raid on London based Gosh! Comics continues to be a strong talking point within the industry. We can now reveal that the list of comics we printed last month, including copies of *Batman*, *Aliens*, *Sandman*, *Animal Man* and *Green Arrow* titles, are amongst the nearly 600 items British Customs have retained, with a view to prosecute. The charges under which they will be prosecuted has not been revealed, although one complaint made is that Gosh! has continued to import similar material to books previously seized by customs. Precisely how Customs define 'similar' is open to debate: on an earlier occasion they seized copies of *Emmanuel* as they were imported, later forwarding the book to the shop, presumably read and cleared of any obscenity – only to be picked up again in the October raid and retained for possible prosecution.

Some comics have been returned to owners Josh and Jill Palmano, including a copy of *Toxic!*, an issue of *Hellblazer*, *Little Ego*, and a handful of others.

Whilst there is still no list of reasons for the seizure of individual titles, some educated guesswork can be made at some of the apparent problem areas: the chest-bursting scenes in *Aliens: Newts Tale* for instance, which have been widely seen elsewhere in films and magazines for years, and is currently available on British news-stands in Dark Horse International's *Aliens* magazine.

Josh Palmano told *Comic World* "The people that we dealt with are really just trying to build up a case, and then it goes to the legal department. All we can do is collate letters from distributors and from publishers and then call on customs to give them some idea of how the industry works."

At the moment one major problem is whether the shop, with so much stock tied up already, can risk further seizures: "When it comes to things like *Sandman* and *Animal Man*, if we're not allowed to sell those comics – not just import them, but not even have them on the premises – we're at somewhat of a disadvantage.

"We've cancelled them with any overseas buyers we had. We can't bring them in from overseas. But we're really going to have to keep on selling them while this continues or we'll be out of business." He also noted that a solution may not necessarily be quickly forthcoming as Custom's are allowed up to twenty years to prosecute!

Letters of support are welcome: the address is Gosh! Comics, 39 Great Russell Street, London WX1B 3HP.

EPIC'S HEAVY HITTERS

March will see the arrival of the Heavy Hitters from Marvel's Epic imprint, an all-new creator-owned action/ adventure line. The new titles will be 32 pages, with one exception, and most are set to run for 3 or 4 issues:

Dragon Lines is set in 2016 mixing martial arts and chinese mythology with future political and terrorist activity in San Francisco. Written by Peter Quinones, pencilled by Ron Lim and inked by Jim Sanders III, it will run 4 issues beginning in March.

Lawdog is an ongoing title from Chuck Dixon & Flint Henry: Lawdog is an interdimensional Lone Ranger along the Terminus, a cursed highway that intersects the timeplanes of a hundred different worlds.

The Midnight Men are vigilantes who prowl the night and fight urban crime, the first Midnight Man dating back to the days of the prospectors; every ten years the mantle passes on to a new hero. Howard Chaykin takes up the story of the latest for three issues starting in April.

Outcastes is set in the far future, orphan Zak and his uncle Grant travelling to the satellite worlds only to witness an assassination – and one of them is the prime suspect. The 3 issues start in April care of writer/artist Mike Vosburg.

Spike is a 4-issue series starting in April from writer Mike Baron and artist Bill Reinhold: Spike's a security contractor from Chicago sucked into an inter-dimensional gang war.

Tor sees the return of Joe Kubert's prehistoric hero in a new magazine format running 4 issue from April.

The Trouble With Girls also returns from April with the original team in control. Gerald Jones & Will Jacobs write, Bret Blevins & Al Williamson pencil and ink a 4-issue secret agent adventure of Lester Girls and an insidious plot to turn everyone into smokers.

Untamed is Neil Hansen's vision of a near-future San Diego overrun by Yakuza gangs into drugs and gun running. Griff Palmer, head of the Supreme Attack Corps, and Dane Kuchiyama, a Japanese cop, scrap it out with a rogue Yakuza group for 3 issues starting in April.

A DARKER IMAGE

January sees the release of *Darker Image*, an anthology featuring Rob Liefeld's 'Bloodwulf', one of the highest paid bounty hunters in the galaxy whose adventures bring him into conflict with everything from dinosaurs to men with arms like couches. This *second* part of a five part story (the first appears in *Brigade 4*) begins with Bloodwulf destroying a planet and gets more outrageous from there.

'The Maxx' is Sam Keith's debut at Image, written by Bill Loebs, the bizarre title character a not-so-superhero, who may only imagine that he's in Australia fighting monsters with a jungle-girl companion; or could he be the homeless, mentally challenged stray discovered by a female social worker?

Rounding off the issue is Jim Lee's 'Deathblow', a merciless killer who discovers he has a fatal illness and tries to absolve himself at a mysterious monastery, only to be caught up in a death-and-mayhem situation.

January's other debut is *Wildstar: Sky Zero* by Al Gordon & Jerry Ordway, set on a future Earth split by warring alien factions fighting for Earth's rare resources. Wildstar is a soldier using symbiotic alien weaponry, caught in a time loop that takes him back before the war where he has to face seven fellow time-travellers.

IMAGE SPLIT FROM MALIBU

See page 53

FIRST WAVE FROM MILESTONE

The new Milestone line from DC is launched with two titles: *Hardware* on February 23 and *Blood Syndicate* on March 9. The Milestone titles are DC's new culturally diverse superhero line written and drawn by packagers Milestone Media (see news, #8).

***Hardware* is the creation of Dwayne McDuffie & Denys Cowan, the writer/artist team behind the recent *Prince: Alter Ego* and *Deathlok*. Jimmy Palmiotti will ink the ongoing series about Curtis Metcalf, employee of Alva Industries, a high-tech 'inspiration factory' run by Edwin Alva. Metcalf, as Hardware, attacks Alva's illegal operations from a secret laboratory using a plasma charged whip, forearm mounted, explosive-firing cannons and a 'smart' battle suit (not a dinner jacket, believe me).**

***Blood Syndicate* are a group of gang warriors from Paris Island. A police operation to radioactively 'tag' 500 street fighters goes terribly wrong, 98% are killed, the remaining 2% given superhuman abilities. They band together as Blood Syndicate to wage war on a local crack factory.**

Both come in a direct market edition ($2.95), polybagged with a 4-colour poster of the cover, a Who's Who profile, trading card and each has one four-part set of a 16-part puzzle, the remaining parts to be produced with *Static* and *Paragon*, the next two Milestone titles. The news-stand version ($1.50) will have a different cover.

★★★★ US NEWSBRIEF ★★★★

CALIBER PRESS

Caliber hop onto the vampire bandwagon with *Young Dracula: Diary of a Vampire*, a three-issue limited-series by Gary Francis, David Mack and Steven Mack. It's the story of Vlad Dracula, white knight of the crusades and chronicles his exploits during the crusades in the premier issue; later issues spotlight his first meeting with Jonathan Harker and then head into the future and a post-holocaust world, the sun blotted out by nuclear ash.

COMICO

The second *Kelley Jones Portfolio* contains five 11 by 17 colour plates in an illustrated cardstock folio with a dossier on each character, including Marcewlla the blood ghoul, Lindow the demonic shaman and the haunting Usher. Priced $13.95.

CULT PRESS

Raggedyman 3 arrives in January, by T.M. Lowe and Anthony Hicks; Bryan Talbot provides the cover, and raved about it in our recent interview, saying that Hick's artwork "keeps getting better and better". Worth checking out for that reason alone.

US Newsbrief continued page 10

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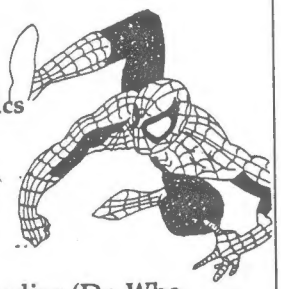

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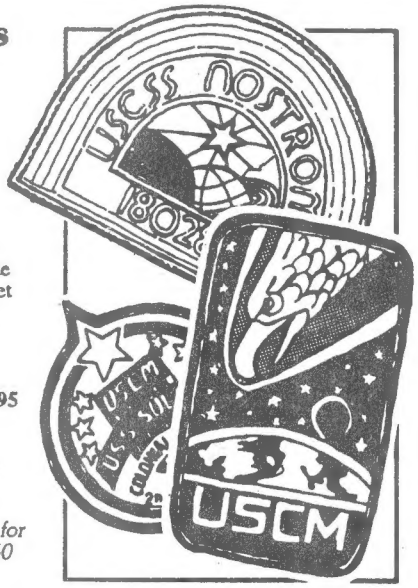

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DC NEWS

COMICS NOIR

The Vertigo line continues with a new ongoing monthly series by Matt Wagner & Guy Davis, *Sandman Mystery Theatre*. It's not the Sandman of Gaiman fame, but Wesley Dodds, the Sandman of the Golden Age. Set in the 1930s against a background of gangsters and debutantes and the gathering clouds of war, Dodds is a detective in the mould of Philip Marlowe and Sam Spade, with a dash of *Twin Peaks*, a menacing figure in his trenchcoat and gasmask, guided by visions to investigate bizarre underworld villains. The first issue, pitting Sandman against the bizarre Tarantula, ships February 9.

Mercy is a 64-page, prestige format one-shot, shipping March 2. Written by J.M. DeMatteis with fully painted artwork by Paul Johnson, it follows the severed consciousness of Joshua Rose, a stroke victim who lies in hospital as his spirit pursues Mercy, an ethereal power who touches the lives of the troubled and the suffering. Rose cannot find peace until he uncovers the mystery of her being.

ON THE DANGER TRAIL

King Faraday - secret agent, spy, adventurer – returns in his own 4-part mini-series, *Danger Trail*. Created by Robert Kanigher & Carmine Infantino in 1950, Faraday appeared in various DC titles, including *New Titans* and *Ms. Tree*; the new series sees Infantino return to pencilling the character alongside writer Len Wein and inker Frank McLoughlin.

A minor Soviet physicist is in possession of sensitive information, and Faraday is sent behind the Iron Curtain by the Central Bureau of Intelligence to rescue the scientist from his abductor, Kobra, one of the most insidious super-villains ever to stalk the planet. Paul Gulacy provides the cover, with issue one shipping February 16.

LEGIONNAIRES

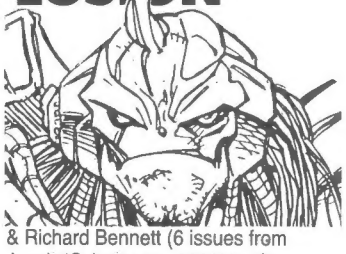
In the aftermath of Earth's destruction, a new band of heroes emerges to help the weary, shaken survivors of New Earth. From the ruins of Metropolis the new *Legionnaires* don new costumes, pick new names and reassert old values: 20 young superheroes for 2995. Tom & Mary Bierbaum team up with artists Chris Sprous & Karl Story for the new monthly series, the first issue shipping February 9 which includes part one of a text feature, 'A Guide to the 30th Century', with background and biographical information on the Legionnaires.

ROUND UP

The *Heckler 7* will be the final issue of the series; *The Superman Gallery* is a 32 page no ads pinup book in the tradition of *The Batman Gallery* with art by Todd McFarlane, Frank Miller, Neal Adams, John Byrne, Steve Rude, George Perez, Mike Zeck, Moebius, Jerry Ordway, Dan Jurgens, Jack Kirby, Joe Shuster, Curt Swan, Wayne Boring, Kurt Schaffenberger and others behind a Walt Simonson cover; *Supergirl/ Team Luthor* is a 64-page special, shipping March 2, as Supergirl leads Team Luthor against the criminals who have taken over the streets of Metropolis since the fall of Superman.

BRITISH NEWS

SUMMER EXPLOSION



Marvel UK continue to take strides towards dominating their American counterparts with the announcement no less than 15 new titles on top of an already busy schedule. Starting the ball rolling will be 'Prometheus Fire' in April (4 issues) by Dan Abnett & Del Barras, set in 2020 and starring Death's Head II's creator, Doctor Necker, now building the ultimate killing machine, Death Metal. 'He Who Walks' is the working title for a 4-issue series starting May, by Nick Abadzis & Paul Johnson – the title character (!) an immortal wayfarer who has scattered replicas of himself throughout the world, reabsorbing them and their knowledge when they die. 'Blood Seed' is another 4 issue series for May, by Paul Neary & Liam Sharp, and Blood Seed a strange figure with a unique genetic message – but who is he to deliver it to?

The summer sees a spate of titles, 'Gunrunner' by Dan Abnett, Andy Lanning & Terry Clark (4 issues from June), 'Ten Sec' by Dan Abnett & Richard Bennett (6 issues from June), 'Cyberspace 3000' by Gary Russell & Rolf Mohr (ongoing), 'Dances With Demons' by Simon Jowett & Charlie Adlard (ongoing), 'Loose Cannons' by Dan Abnett & Mark Harrison (4 issues from July), 'Die Cut' by Glenn Dakin & Mike Gonzaga (4 issues from July), 'Gene Machine' by Michael Cook & Christian Gorny (ongoing from July), 'Plasmer' by Glenn Dakin & Jerry Cruz (4 issues from July), 'Death Metal' by Simon Furman & Del Barras (4 issues from July), and 'Death Rattle' by Craig Houston & Liam Sharp (4 issues from July). There's also to be an as yet untitled team book to follow up the action of 'The MyS-TECH Wars'. 'Immortalis' by Nick Vince & Mark Buckingham begins in May, but you'll learn a little more about that in next month's interview with Mark.

BRITISH NEWSBRIEF

ACME

The Acme/Dark Horse *James Bond: Serpent's Tooth* will conclude with issue 3, due to ship in the second half of December. This will be followed by two new Bond projects beginning in March: 'Light of My Death' by Das Petrou & John Watkis begins in *Dark Horse Comics 8* (see last month's *Ring of Roses* interviews) and the first issue of the bi-monthly *Silent Armageddon* by Simon Jowett & John Burns which takes Bond into the world of computer espionage and virtual reality.

DARK HORSE

Issue 17 of *The Terminator* concluded Dark Horse International's short run on that title, but the company continues to produce the highly successful *Aliens* magazine, which will begin serialising Pete Milligan & Paul Johnson's 'Aliens: *sacrifice* ' in #9, followed by 'Aliens: Crusade' by Michael Cook & Christian Gorny in #13. Both the currently running Star Wars and Indiana Jones serials end in issue 6 of *Star Wars*; replacing them will be *Tales of the Jedi* and a new IJ series. For more Star Wars news see our interviews beginning page 27.

January will also see Dark Horse publishing a British news-stand magazine version of Topps *Dracula* 4-issue series.

D.C. THOMSON

'The Famous Action Paper For Boys', *Victor*, has folded after 1657 issues, the last edition cover-dated 21 November. With no other boys' comic left to fold into, the end came without the usual 'Great News, Pals' cover splash so well known to collectors of British comics. That leaves Thomson's with only *Commando Library* and *Football Library* aimed at the boys market, and there are no sign of any new titles in the near future.

DRAGON'S WORLD

Just released are three more beautifully produced paperbacks from Dragon's World, *Through A Looking Glass* by Wayne Anderson, *The Book of the Dragon* by Montse Sant & Ciruelo Cabral, and *Ladies: Retold Tales of Goddesses and Heroines* by Boris & Doris Vallejo. The former two are priced £10.95, the latter £12.95.

British Newsbrief continued page 12

VINYLMAN ENTERPRISES PRESENTS

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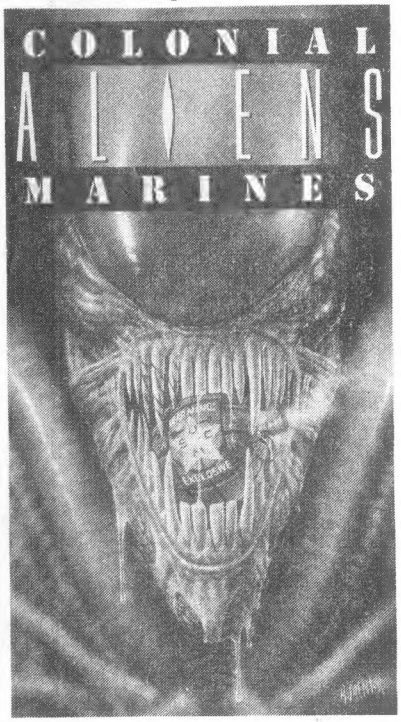
★★ US ★★ NEWSBRIEF CONTINUED

DARK HORSE

Chris Warner lays down his brush and takes up his biro to write *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, a 32 colour-page, 12-issue series with art by Tony Akins and Paul Guinan. The latest bug-batch is holed up in



a toxic waste dump, a strangely organised batch of Aliens; assigned to check out the dump is Lt. Joseph Henry, son of an influential politician, on a charge for insubordination, and now head of a platoon of the worst Colonial Marines in the sector. Covers for the new series are provided by British newcomer, Robert Mentor.

Propellerman is the star of a new 8-issue series, created by German artist Matthias *(Bell's Theorum)* Schultheiss. Set in a future world following the economic and ecological collapse, a living weapon escapes, blazing a trail of destruction as it searches for its creator.

Geof Darrow's *Comics and Stories* is a 60-page, $29.95 oversized hardcover collection of his incredibly intricate artwork. The volume includes two double-page fold-outs, and is printed in full-colour. The drawback is that it is in French throughout, Dark Horse making available the last few copies of the French edition.

Steven Grant, Nick Gnazzo & Bruce Patterson begin a new 4-chapter RoboCop serial in *Dark Horse Comics 6*, which also includes further chapters of 'Mad Dogs', Predator and Indiana Jones.

A new 7-part Moebius story begins in *Dark Horse Presents 70*, 'The Madwoman of the Sacred Heart' which teams him up once again with writer/filmmaker Alexandro Jodorowsky.

RoboCop: Prime Suspect concludes with #4, but there's no time for rest after RoboCop has survived his encounter with souped-up ZED-309s: he's cleared of Izzy's murder but there are still loose ends to the mystery of Matthew Zieske.

ECLIPSE

Marion Zimmer Bradley's award-winning retelling of Arthurian legend, *The Mists of Avalon*, is being adapted into five 48-page volumes, with a script by Sarah Byam and art by Britain's own Steve Parkhouse. It's scheduled to begin in the summer, and will be published in Britain by HarperCollins.

But before that you can read *Trapped*, based on the horror novel by Dean R. Koontz, adapted by Ed Gorman with artwork by Anthony Bilau. A young mother and her son drive to her remote country house through a raging blizzard. They ignore a temporary road-block set by a secret genetic engineering lab, a bad move, because she reaches home only to find it full of giant mutant rats.

FANTACO

Fantaco celebrate 15 years in the comic's business with its first colour comic, a 2-issue anthology title, *Fantaco Presents*. Jan Whiting's Bridge returns for 'The Krush', set 50 years in the future in a Church and State controlled society; 'Earther's Luck' is a colour *Night's Children* tale by Wendy Snow-Lang in which Klaus is stranded on an alien world only to become embroiled in a baffling mystery.

FANTAGRAPHICS

Daniel Clowes concludes 'Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron' in *Eightball 10* which also includes the full colour 'A Message to the People of the Future'.

Bill Griffith's Zippy returns to comics in *Zippy Quarterly* which collects together almost 100 recent Zippy daily strips, plus a 16-page section representing classic Zippy strips from his days in the underground.

Continued on page 12

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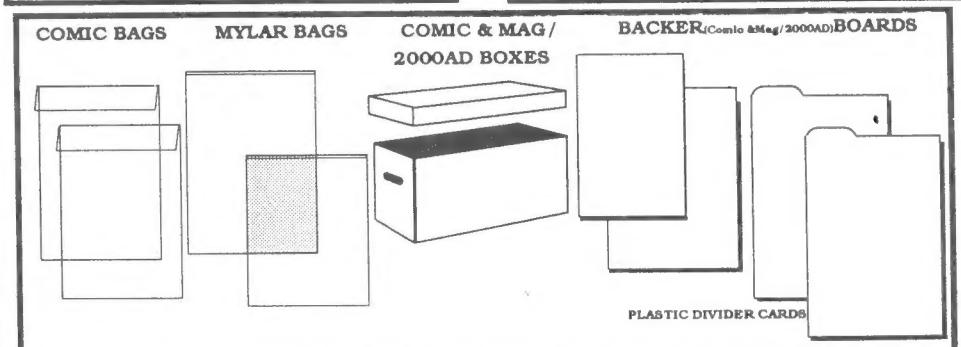

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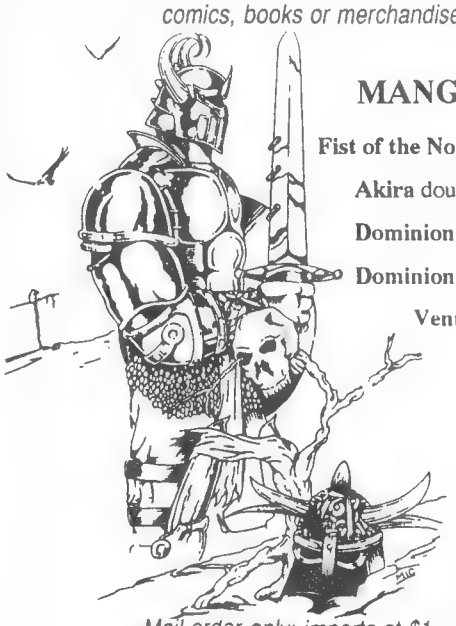

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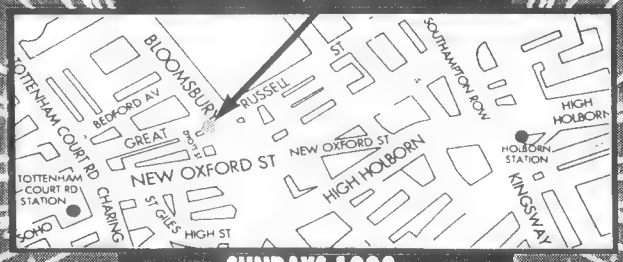

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UK NEWSBRIEF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

FLEETWAY EDITIONS

Issue 17 of *Judge Dredd the Megazine* features the climax to 'Mechanismo' and the Judge Hershey serial, 'Deathsquads' behind a Colin MacNeil cover. In 'Influential Circles' Armitage discovers the killer of 49 of Brit-Cit's VIP's, and Al Bestardi and son are travelling across America, killing off rival mob family leaders in 'Blood on the Bib'.

A special seasonal issue 18 leads off with Judge Dredd in 'A Christmas Carol' by John Wagner, Barry Kitson & Dredd newcomer, Charles Dickens; there's 'Hogmanay' celebrations in Calhab Justice by Jim Alexander & John Ridgway; Al & Son reach Dallas; and there's a life or death struggle as 'Influential Circles' concludes.

VICTOR GOLLANCZ

Victor Gollancz Ltd. was acquired in October by publishers Cassell, the second time it has changed hands in three years. Previous owners, Houghton-Mifflin, had bought the independent company as part of an expansion into Britain and Europe. Although the company made a loss of $1 million in 1990 thanks to the depressed market, Cassell believe that they can spread overheads by combining addresses: Gollancz's Henrietta Street offices will be closed and all staff moved to Cassell's offices in The Strand. The acquisition, say Cassell, means an expansion into children's books, science fiction and other general fiction as their regular output of non-fiction has reached saturation point. The move will not affect the planned Gollancz line of graphic novels.

GUY N. SMITH

Guy N. Smith, the horror writer with over 60 novels to his credit, has written a graphic novel featuring his most famous creations, The Crabs. Entitled *Crab Fury*, the black & white original will be published

by Black Hill Books in 1993 with art by Charlie ('Armitage') Adlard. Smith has his own fan club, organised by Sandra Webb, 59 Meriden Avenue, Woolaston, Stourbridge, W. Midlands DY8 4QR. An SAE will bring you a membership form and further details.

★★ US NEWSBRIEF

CONTINUED

LAST GASP

Firkin the Cat 7 collects more of Hunt Emerson's outrageously funny *Fiesta* strip. If you've not seen it, check out out interview with Hunt starting page 23.

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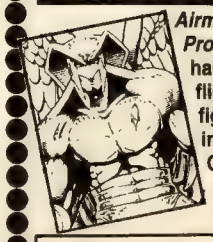

Airman, from the *Protectors* series, has his first solo flight in January, fighting the insidious Conqueror to rescue a friend, the Shark.

TUNDRA PUBLISHING

From the pages of *Heavy Metal* comes *Druuna: Creatura* by Paolo Eleuteri Serpieri, a full colour album (priced $14.95) of a dying moment and the moment that time stops.

VALIANT

Part one of 'The Book of the Geomancer' begins in *Eternal Warrior 9*, a two-parter by Mark Moretti & John Dixon following Master Darque's exploration of the secret of the Geomancer's power.

XO-Manowar 11 is part two of 'Turok's Return', continuing the dinosaur invasion of the twentieth century.

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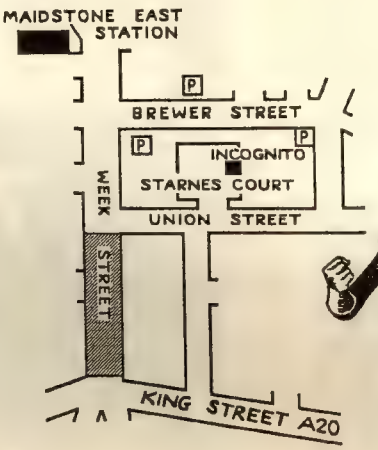

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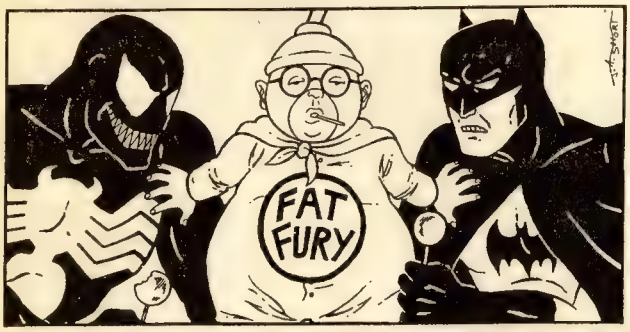

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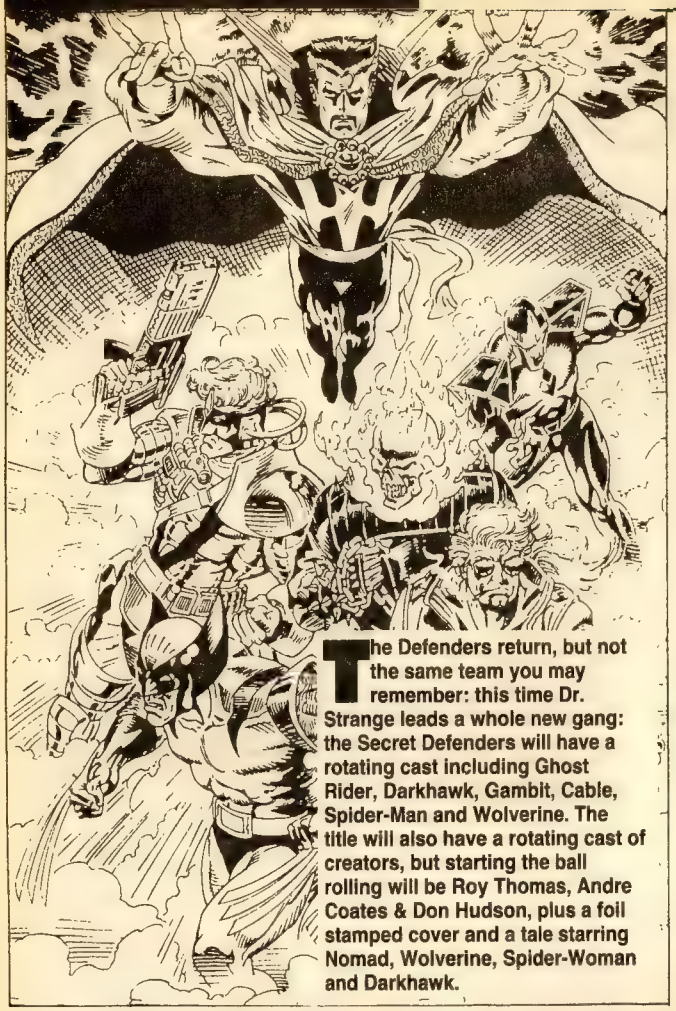

The Defenders return, but not the same team you may remember: this time Dr. Strange leads a whole new gang: the Secret Defenders will have a rotating cast including Ghost Rider, Darkhawk, Gambit, Cable, Spider-Man and Wolverine. The title will also have a rotating cast of creators, but starting the ball rolling will be Roy Thomas, Andre Coates & Don Hudson, plus a foil stamped cover and a tale starring Nomad, Wolverine, Spider-Woman and Darkhawk.

RESURRECTION

Jim Starlin picks up his pencil for the four-part *Silver Surfer/ Warlock* limited series, *Resurrection*. He's also writing the series and inking the first issue (Terry Austin takes over for the latter three), in which Warlock and the Infinity Watch agree to help the Surfer find his lost love, Shalla Bal, but only for a price.

ROUND UP

Punisher: The Ghosts of Innocents, a two-parter by Jim Starlin & Tom Grindberg has Frank haunted by the ghosts of innocent bystanders when they are caught in the crossfire between drugs dealers and the Punisher.

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the web, celebrate the 30th Anniversary of *Amazing Spider-Man #1* with a Spidey/Venom 64-page *Amazing Spider-Man 375* which promises to be a major turning point in the relationship between the two.

Talking of anniversaries, it's Iron Man's 30th in a couple of months time, and to begin the celebrations Marvel reprint *Tales of Suspense 39* in their Marvel Milestones series. *The Iron Man Manual* is a one-shot technical volume full of detailed schematics of weapons and armor. And *Iron Man 290* comes with a gold foil cover, the debut of his new armor and a special back-up feature.

Fantastic Four Unlimited is a new quarterly series launching in January with 64 pages of action from Howard Mackie & Roy Thomas scripting and Herb Trimpe & Mike DeCarlo on art. The villainous Klaw invades Wakanda with plans to kill T'Challa. Black Panther can't stop him on his own, and calls in the FF.

Meanwhile, over at Epic, Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean team up for a hellraising tale about a crossword puzzle in *Hellraiser 20*.

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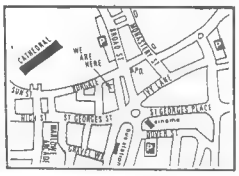

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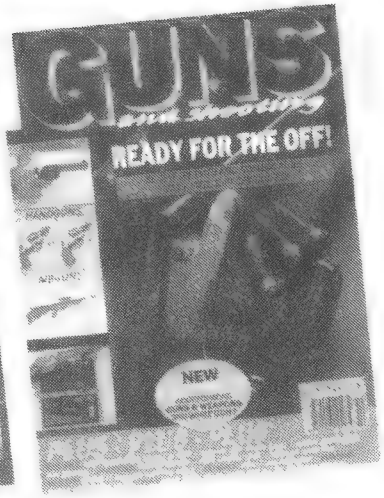

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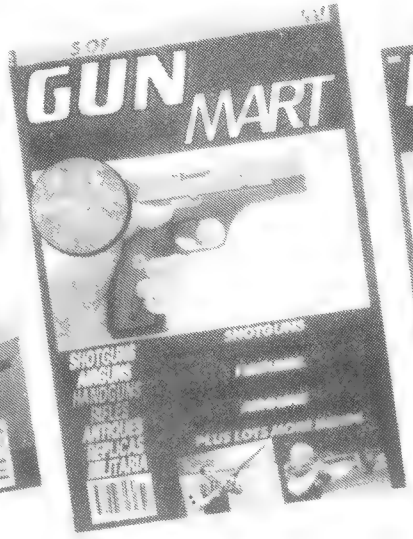

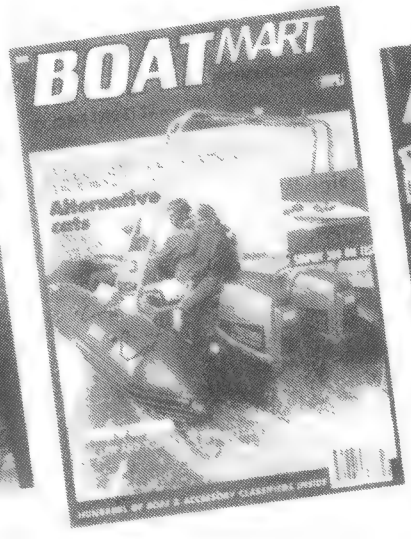

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   (a) 2 metres (b) 4 feet (c) 6 feet
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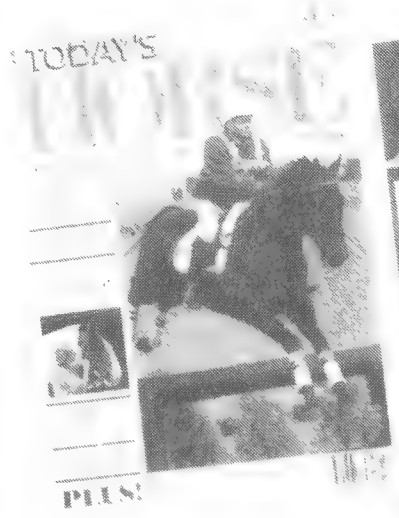

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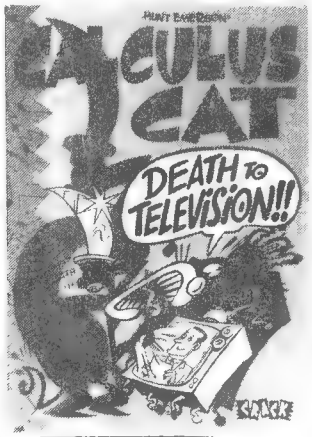

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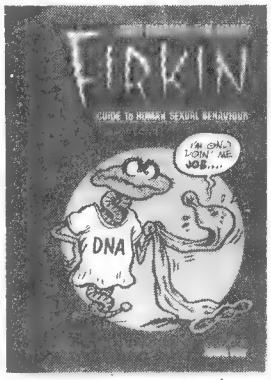

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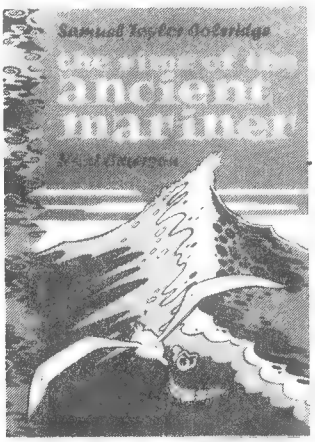

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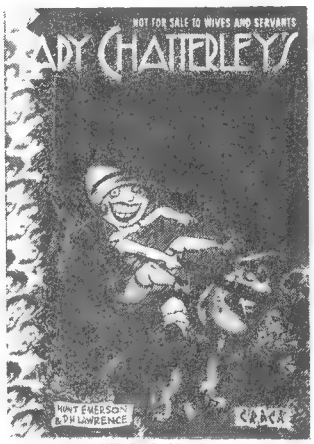

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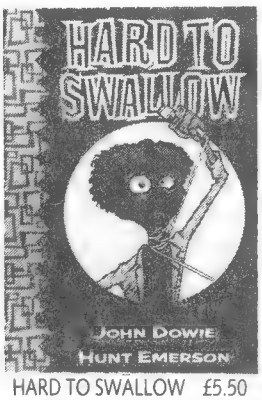

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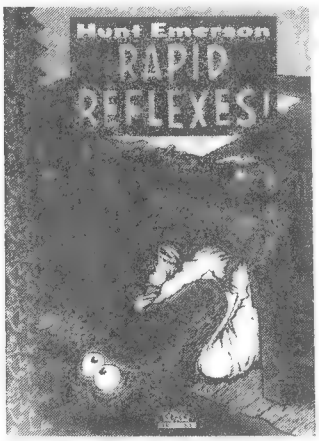

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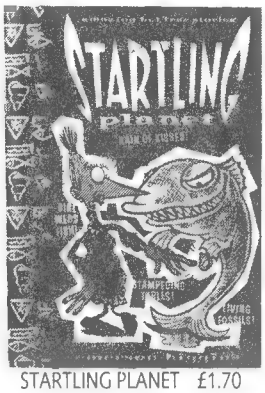

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Of Lovers & Lampreys

WHEREIN HUNT EMERSON EXPLAINS THE FINER POINTS OF LIFE TO PAUL H. BIRCH.

In 1970 Hunt Emerson lucked out on his choices of where to study for a Diploma of Art & Design and ended up in Birmingham. After a year he'd had enough, dropped out, and gradually became involved with the Arts Lab, via avant-garde theatre and music workshops, and ultimately within its print shop. Concurrently, his drawings were appearing in underground papers such as* The Streepress *and* Mother Grumble, *"From originally doing my painting – which was never any good! – I took up drawing instead, and gradually the work became more cartoony," he recalls. Slowly, those drawings evolved into half-page comic strips.

"It was all nonsensical and stream-of-consciousness material. They weren't exactly funny but they were amusing and they filled a space. Then I saw Robert Crumb and Gilbert Shelton and started deliberately aiming them in that direction."

Initially perplexed over receiving mail concerning the self-published comix he'd started putting out, he discovered Dez Skinn had placed an ad in *Fantasy Advertiser International*. Unwittingly Hunt had made his first contact with comics fandom.

"I got introduced to this world where there were actual comic fans ready to buy the things," and smiling adds, "And spent the next twenty years trying to avoid them!"

Seven years down the road, Hunt was earning money illustrating, with the odd comic strip appearing wherever there was a willing publisher, but Ar-Zak, the Arts Lab's comic imprint was slowing down.

"We were always looking for quality in production values, we wanted things to look like *Metal Hurlant*. When photocopiers and punk rock came in what we were doing immediately became redundant." Laughing, "The quality values were of no interest to them and we were part of the past!" Fortunately *Fiesta* wanted a two page comic strip, and a regular outlet for his comics work was found.

"I said I needed a writer and they suggested Tym Manley, and it worked out fine – we're still doing it now twelve years later."

Firkin the Cat, for such it was, has since strayed into album form, had foreign editions and six comic books. American co-publisher Last Gasp want a seventh, so look for a new Knockabout edition soon.

"I was working all the time and becoming a real recluse," he reflects. "I used to receive people to see me but they used to have to sit and watch me draw.

"I was doing advertising and illustration work which began to pull in some good money now and again. I would do anything that anyone asked me to do basically, but whatever I was doing was working to support me doing my comics."

A trip to the States led to him meeting Gilbert Shelton who, impressed with work begun on the Harvey Kurtzman influenced *Thunderdogs*, said Rip Off would publish it.

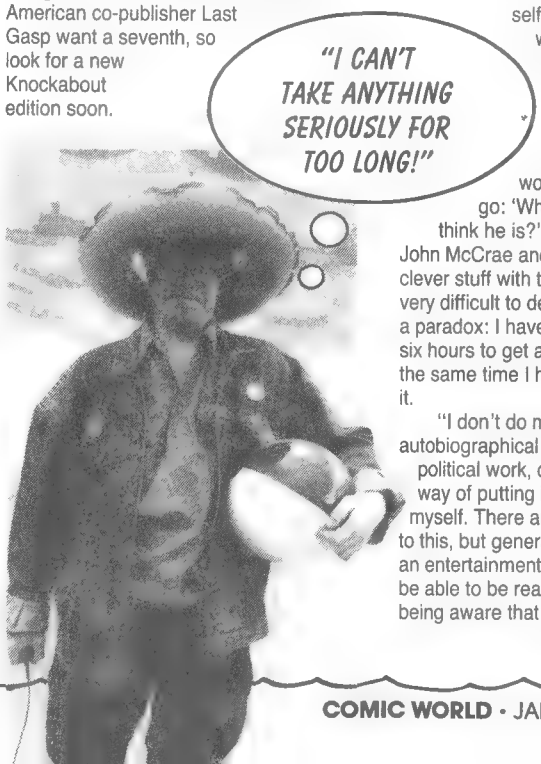
"It took me another three years and it came out just at the time when Hassle Free Press was becoming Knockabout Comix." The distributor turned publisher proved the proverbial godsend. "We did *The Big Book of Everything*, and then I was churning the work out because we were doing *Knockabout* the comic, so I had an outlet for comic strips and then they were being collected into albums."

Almost all of Hunt's sentences are punctuated by riotous laughter, "I can't take anything seriously for too long!" he explains.

"I really don't see comics as a serious medium, certainly not for me. I can't do serious things, I get very embarrassed by them and feel self-conscious. It's the same way as I'm stuck in a particular style of drawing.

"I feel that if I produce a comic strip that's got experimental work, people are going to go: 'What's he doing? Who's he think he is?' That's for people like John McCrae and Steve Pugh to do clever stuff with the medium itself. It's very difficult to describe this because it's a paradox: I have to get stuck in for five or six hours to get any real work done, yet at the same time I have to be detached from it.

"I don't do much in the way of autobiographical material, I don't do political work, or use the medium as a way of putting in messages from myself. There are obviously exceptions to this, but generally speaking I see it as an entertainment medium and it should be able to be read without the reader being aware that I had drawn it.



***Lady Chatterley's Lover* © Knockabout Comics**

Photo by Hunt Emerson

His sense of humour derives from early issues of *Mad*, Monty Python, and radio comedy shows such as Tony Hancock and The Goons, and while he'll play tapes of such as he's working, his record collection's also impressive. Of his jazz hustling duo, Max Zillion & Alto Ego who have a gig in Epic's new *A1 1*, he surprises me by revealing, "I like saxophones, the language, and the bee-bop bit, but I never really liked the music much. I've slept through Courtney Pine twice!" Damn! His lively sense of page movement, and busy panel work reminded me, if of anything, musical notations to a jazz score, and now, the impression needs re-evaluating.

VERY WELL, PETER.... I'M OPPOSED TO GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE, SO I'M GOING TO DO ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ABOUT THE MADNUKE POWER STATIONS!
HURRAY!! WOOPEE!
...BUT, MOTHER... YOU... er... DID INTERFERE WHEN YOU BANNED VIDEO NASTIES BECAUSE OF THE DAMAGE TO OUR MINDS....
...AND... um.. NUCLEAR NASTIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO ...er... DAMAGE OUR BODIES.... ..Oh Lor!...
..er...er... AND ... um... AS CONSERVATIVES WE'RE MEANT TO CARE... eek:
...AND OF COURSE I CARE... I CARE DEEPLY....
YES, GEOFFREY..
YES, GEOFFREY..
YES, GEOFFREY..

You Are Maggie Thatcher © Pat Mills & Hunt Emerson

"IT'S QUITE A SURPRISE IN A WAY THAT PEOPLE ARE PREPARED TO PUT UP WITH THESE MEANDERING STORIES THAT I DO"

Aside from Manley he's on occasion collaborated with Alan Moore and, more substantially, Pat Mills, but of a more recent vintage, names like D.H. Lawrence and S.T. Coleridge come to mind – royalties prove more substantial with deceased scripters.

"We started with *Lady Chatterley's Lover* after the Knockabout court case, and that proved to be a success both artistically and commercially. It's published in six languages now: English, Spanish, Swedish, Finnish, French, and Portuguese for Brazil, where they also have a Book Club edition.

"*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* has only been published in Finland and England which is a disappointment because it's my favourite of those I've done." Knockabout's Carol Bennett coloured the book, "It was delicate and didn't overwhelm the drawings. She did a lovely job."

His latest project is *Casanova*.

"It's a 96 page book and we're going to do it as three comic books first and then an album. It's structured into twelve chapters, three chapters an issue. The intention would be to get them all out within a year. I have to have at least 32 pages drawn before we go to press, and I've got thirteen drawn!" he laughs before taking a quick phone call, by which time I've only skimmed through the pages but still chuckled at least three times.

"*Lady Chatterley* was done as a collaboration with Knockabout, and was very much a precis of the book. *The Ancient Mariner* is all in there as Coleridge wrote it, including his notes. And *Casanova* is in between.

"I've invented a story about the end of Casanova's life and in the course of the story he refers back over his life. I've taken those incidents from his memoirs, some of the actual dialogue is direct from him.

"Doing the research was fascinating. People just tend to think of the sex thing but there was a lot more to him than that. For a start his sex life was finished by the time he was forty and he lived to seventy-six! At the end of his life he lived in a castle in Bavaria as a librarian, but that was more or less because that was where he was washed up, having been made persona non grata in pretty well every country in Europe!

"Don Juan, the other great lover of story books was into quantity but Casanova was much more into the quality of his experiences. he had a lot of lovers but it wasn't an overwhelming amount. He was an adventurer, a charlatan, and a hustler who had some extraordinary adventures which I'm including.

"It's also a sexy book, but it's not going to be porn." Sex helps sales, mind. "So they say," he parries back. Methinks it's a book that'll sell well here and on the continent.

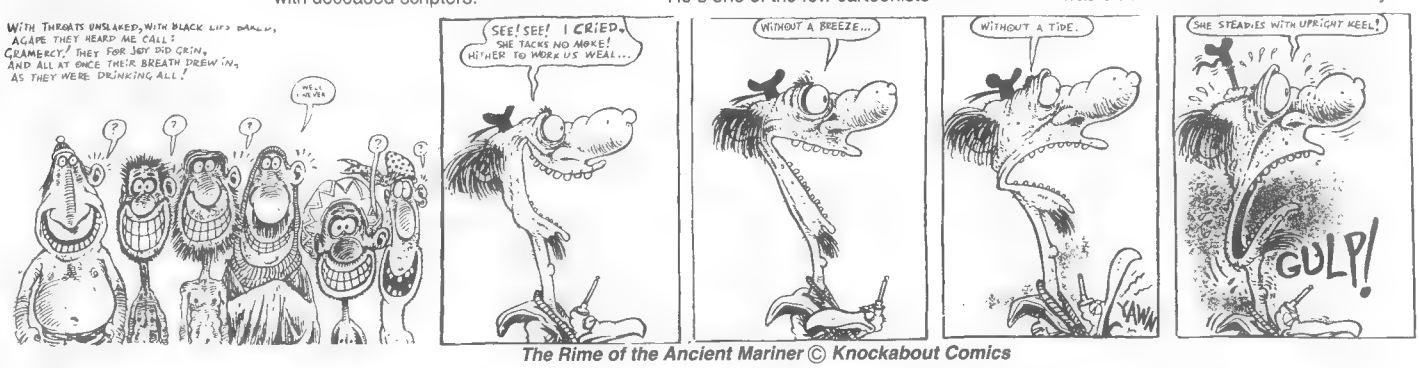
"I think of it in English language terms first, and then look to translations." He's one of the few cartoonists represented by Parisian literary agent, Lora Fountain, whose recent successes are a German *Calculus Cat* book, and various pieces for an Argentinian magazine. "Lora is able to sell old work as well as the newer stuff, and hopefully this will happen with *Casanova*.

"The foreign publishing comes as a result of the travelling and vice-versa," he says of various sorties across Europe attending conventions, festivals, and generally making up for not taking a holiday in ten years prior to 1986. "The last couple of years I've been away a lot, taking every opportunity I could, but at some time you have to go and produce this stuff which is the reason they invite you in the first place . . . a bloody nuisance, but!"

Firkin © Tim Manley & Hunt Emerson

One of his many travel stories simply demands relating, albeit briefly: He was cordially invited, along with forty others by Finland's town of Kemi's Comic Festival organisers to a three day outing to Murmansk in Russia.

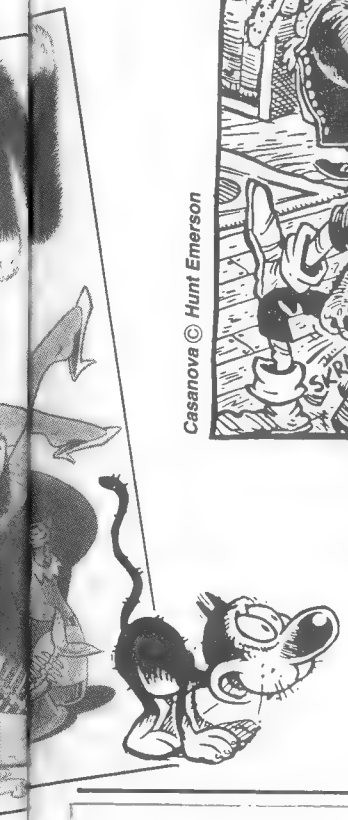
"It was horrible! Everything that could have been was broken, nothing worked properly, you couldn't get anything unless you had dollars; and then it was on the black market. There was one big hotel in the middle of the town, and it was crawling with pimps, prostitutes, and black marketeers. There was blood on the stairs and somebody


WITH THROATS UNSLAKED, WITH BLACK LIPS BAKED, AGAPE THEY HEARD ME CALL: GRAMERCY! THEY FOR JOY DID GRIN, AND ALL AT ONCE THEIR BREATH DREW IN, AS THEY WERE DRINKING ALL!
SEE! SEE! I CRIED. SHE TACKS NO MORE! HITHER TO WORK US WEAL...
WITHOUT A BREEZE...
WITHOUT A TIDE.
YAWN
SHE STEADIES WITH UPRIGHT KEEL!
GULP!

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner © Knockabout Comics

"CULTURAL NECESSITY" MY ARSE! HE KEEPS ME HERE BECAUSE I TELL HIM DIRTY STORIES!
LEWD FABLES! RIBALD TALES! ...heeheehee... HE THINKS I MAKE THEM UP, BUT I DON'T! THEY'RE ALL TRUE...ALL THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE...
SKRAT
Urp!

Casanova © Hunt Emerson



was murdered in the foyer while we were there.

"The lifts only went up, you had to come down by the back stairs – I had this theory that they were collecting these lifts on the roof and once a month they'd sling them all off to use again!

"We couldn't find any vegetarian food, they were serving lamprey salads . . . lampreys for god's sake! We were drinking vodka and Russian champagne to survive by the end of it!"

Armed with an overhead projector and transparencies of his work, for the past three years he's been giving lectures on cartooning which has led to him surprising himself by becoming a teacher at the American College in London.

"It's bizarre!" he laughs, "I'm completely unqualified to teach, and I'm finding my feet as I'm going on. The whole thing about being an authority figure is very difficult . . . not too difficult though," he quickly interjects, "I'm able to chase them back to their desks when they need it!

It's a shame nobody can do that for the economy, let alone Britain's supposed mature comic book market.

"Knockabout's still in business, but we've had to cut down on things drastically." He says thankfully. Just out is the *R. Ckrumb Draws The Blue* collection, and there'll be new issues of the *Furry Freak Brothers* and *Fat Freddy's Cat* in the near future.

"Knockabout is able to run on smaller margins than others, we can do books with a print run of 5,000. What we want to do is sell them in a year; it generally takes longer but we can get away with that and keep things moving or ticking over.

What does the typical Hunt Emerson reader look like? "Stoned mainly!" he jokes, and while that might be atruism of sorts, there's surely no doubt that his work would appeal much more to the general reader than those creating steroid-benefited fantasy heroics.

"It's quite a surprise in a way that people are prepared to put up with these meandering stories that I do, and stay with me while I consistently avoid the mainstream. I find this really heart-warming that these people actually care about my work in this way, and at times I try to think how can I capitalise on this. But then again if I start thinking in that way it starts to kill it. I have to do the things to please myself, I have to do things that are going to make me laugh, and I guess there are a certain amount of people out there who have the same sense of humour as me, and are prepared to go along with it!" CW

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22 Stormtrooper — fire left
23 Stormtrooper — big gun (firing)
24 Stormtrooper — gun lowered
25 Stormtrooper — firing pistol
26 Stormtrooper — gun resting middle
27 Death Star trooper
28 Death Star gunner
29 Snowtrooper
30 Hoth rebel
31 Jawa
32 Leia on Bespin
33 Zarda
34 X-Wing pilot
35 Probe droid
36 Imperial droid
37 Obi Wan Kenobi
38 Mon Calamari
39 The Emperor
40 Admiral Ackbar
41 Quarren
42 Greedo
43 Bolsh
44 Gamorrean guard axe level
45 Gamorrean guard axe high
46 Bossk
47 Bobba Fett
48 IG88
49 Garindan
50 Wee Quay
51 Tusken Raider
52 Ren Gar
53 Lando in Armor
54 Nikto
55 Ithorian
56 Kerry
57 Muftak
58 Sivrak
59 Female rebel merc
60 Tie Fighter pilot
61 Labria
62 Hem Dazon
63 Bib Fortuna
64 Ephant Mon
65 Death Star officer

STAR WARS

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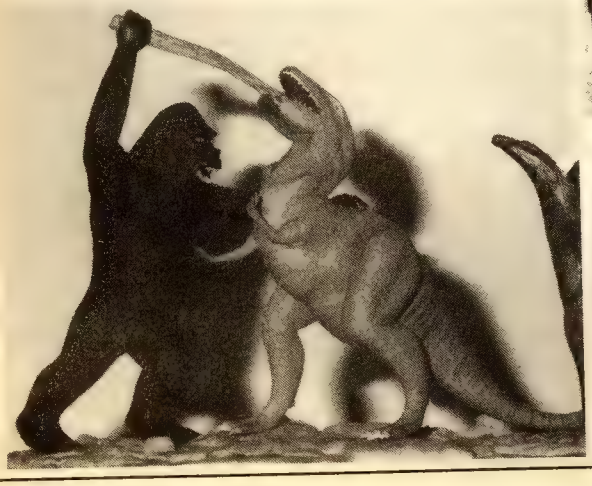

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STAR WARRIORS

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ROB MORAN TALKS TO DARK EMPIRE ARTIST, CAM KENNEDY

Cam Kennedy is a very funny man with a nice line in caustic Glasgow wit, his conversation peppered with one-liners and little puns. He can also produce some wickedly accurate impersonations of some of the best known names in comicdom.

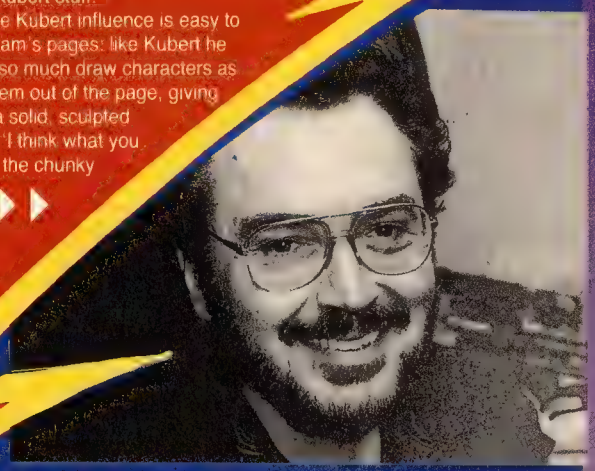
He's also a very busy artist, the past year having seen the publication of the Punisher Graphic Novel, Blood on the Moors, a two-part Batman story, and a beautifully painted Star Wars mini-series. Not content with this he is currently at work on a Lobo mini-series and drawing the Airtight Garage for Moebius. A very busy man indeed.

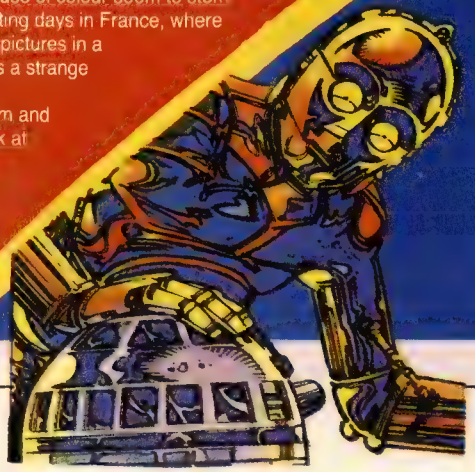
I have to say up front that I am unashamedly a fan of the man's work, whether it is the solid line and textural quality of his black and white work, or the use of tone to enhance emotion and mood in his painted strips. Cam's theories and use of colour seem to stem from his painting days in France, where he produced pictures in a style that was a strange melange of Expressionism and Cubism. Look at the cover of *Light and Darkness War 3* and you will get some idea of what this earlier work was like.

His influences, however, were shaped far earlier, from his childhood reading of comics. "I read the *Eagle* and the *Dandy* and *Beano*. The usual stuff that children read," he recalls. "When I got a bit older, round about 11, I discovered *Sgt. Rock* and *Our Army At War*, which weren't easy to get hold of in Glasgow at the time; about the only place you could pick them up were in 'specialist' bookshops. These were seedy little places that sold magazines like *Slag*, which was considered very daring in those days – usually some scantily clad woman on the cover about to be devoured by natives.

"I used to walk in to Glasgow city centre and search through the piles of American comics these shops also sold looking for Joe Kubert stuff."

The Kubert influence is easy to see in Cam's pages: like Kubert he doesn't so much draw characters as carve them out of the page, giving figures a solid, sculpted quality. "I think what you mean is the chunky





STAR WARS WRITER, TOM VEITCH TALKS TO LANCE RICKMAN

Tom Veitch's first comic work was in the early seventies, where his stories appeared in such underground titles as Grunt, The Legion Of Charlies, Mother's Oats Comix, Skull Comics, Slow Death Funnies, Two-Fisted Zombies, Weird Trips Magazine, Deviant Slice Funnies ***and the original run of*** Death Rattle. ***He made a reasonable living from these magazines, the print runs of which varied between 10,000 and 200,000 until a Supreme Court ruling empowered individual communities to decide their own obscenity regulations. Distributors, uncertain of what would be legal in various parts of the country, reacted by quickly dropping all uncertain material, and the underground comics boom was over. Veitch turned to writing novels and poetry, became a typesetter and eventually moved to the East coast in 1982, where he followed his brother Rick (The One, Brat Pack) into mainstream comics. Veitch also credits Steve Bissette, whom he met while working in the undergrounds, with helping him to get started in the business.***

"Bissette is this great matchmaker," says Veitch. "He introduced me to Cam Kennedy, and through him I met Karen Berger and Archie Goodwin, my first two editors. It was a long process; making contacts, meeting people, doing proposals and getting them accepted, so that although I was in straight away, it was about five years before anything was coming out.

His first published book was *The*

TOM VEITCH

Light and Darkness War © DC Comics

Light And Darkness War, a six-issue mini-series published by Epic Comics, about a Vietnam veteran who discovers that his dead friends still exist in a Valhalla-like after-life.

"I think I started with the idea of an alternate universe in a constant state of war," says Veitch, "then coupled it with Vietnam; some people go to heaven, some go to hell, and soldiers go to this warriors' universe. The funny thing was that when I met Cam, I had the basic story outline in my bag, and he said, 'I have this image of a story I want to draw, a warrior sitting on a horse, holding a spear and looking up. The clouds open and a Huey helicopter comes through'. That image became the cover of issue four."

At that time Archie Goodwin was in control of Epic. Did Veitch find him as easy to work with as everybody says?

"Archie Goodwin is more like a teacher, very patient. When he criticises your stuff, everything he says is exactly right. He knows. *Light And Darkness* was still being worked on while I sold *The Nazz, Clash* and *My Name Is Chaos* all at the same time to DC."

The story of a man's search for extraordinary power and his corruption by it, *The Nazz* was not a conventional super-hero story. Veitch reveals that he first had the idea while reading about carnival strong-men in the early 20th Centry.

"Most of them were big guys who built up their muscles, then went out and lifted freight-cars," says Veitch, "But the smallest of them, called The Mighty Atom, studied Yoga techniques in the East, had a vegetarian diet, did breathing exercises, and could do more amazing things than these big muscle-men. He became the star strong-man of his time. That's how the concept began, and then I began to get into the whole spiritual side of it. It's an unwritten sub-text of the whole super-hero genre that a super-hero would be a bastard, holding lesser humans in contempt. I think that's coming out with characters like The Punisher, where people are just fodder for his destruction."

The original artist for *The Nazz* would have been Richard Piers Raynor, but when he dropped out Bryan Talbot became available; the follow-up, *Clash*, was drawn by Adam Kubert, fresh from Comico's *Jade* mini-series. "It took him two and a half, three years to draw *Clash*," says Veitch. "*My Name Is Chaos* was, from the beginning, a John Ridgway project."

Sales on all these projects were reasonable, although Veitch never made any royalties. Did he feel that their marketing could have been better?

"We were happy with the books but I wasn't happy with the price on them; those books are over-priced, they don't cost that much to print. It's a matter of greed. We discussed it and Dick Giordano told me that they could charge $2.95 or $3.95, but it's a matter of greed; you can print that, too. Actually, both *Clash* and *The Nazz* are being reprinted in Brazil, Portugal and five or six other countries, which will pay off."

ANIMAL MAN

When it was known that Grant Morrison was to leave *Animal Man*, editor Karen Berger asked Veitch to submit a proposal, which was accepted.

"I had a general idea, but not specifics, of how Morrison would leave it," says Veitch. "I was just told that the family would be back together and just to start afresh. For a while, it was a lot of fun. I tended to identify with the character, and he had an incredible innocence and simplicity about him, a super-hero who's very ingenuous. Instead of having somebody who's just kicking everybody's arse, I like this guy, who was constantly unaffected by things around him."

How did fans react to his emphasis on Buddy's family problems, rather than on super-villain battles?

"It was great. With the children, it was like writing *Donald Duck and his Nephews* or something; I tried to take a Carl Barks view of it, and do it in a very easy, simple way. Both editor Art Young and I were also great *Twin Peaks* fans, so there was lots of character stuff, but you were never quite sure what was happening. I think that influence threw a lot of people off; we got a lot of letters from people saying, 'when's something going to happen?'. Steve Dillon's simple, open style was perfectly suited to what I was doing, beautiful. The issue that Steve Pugh did, on the other hand, when we went back and re-told the origin, was just awesome. And the Bolland covers were wonderful. It was a lot of fun, and it

"BOTH CAM KENNEDY AND I ARE S WARS NUTS. IF YOU LOOK AT CAM'S YOU CAN TELL. WHEN I SAW THE FI FILM, I WAS SUCKED RIGHT INTO I

CAM KENNEDY

quality his line had. Kubert's work isn't one-dimensional – all the figure work is solid, has this incredibly strong, almost macho prescencee, and a lot of good movement. These are the same qualities I picked up on in the work of Victor de la Fuente, who is like the Spanish Joe Kubert. I suppose that those two guys are my main influences."

Comics, however, didn't hold the greatest thrall. Did he always want to be a comic strip artist? "No. I wanted to be a plumber," he says. "Then, later on, I wanted to be a cowboy, but there are enough cowboy plumbers around.

"I think I wanted to be a cowboy because when I was a wee boy my mother wanted me to take piano lessons, but I managed to convince her that cowboys didn't play the piano. I just always drew, but at the time I was reading the Kubert stuff I didn't realise that you could get a job doing that, that someone would pay you to sit and draw."

Instead, he went walkabout in France at about the age of 17, working in vinyards, doing odd jobs and generally soaking up the atmosphere and language of the country. He ended up working and living at a farm where he became so close to the couple who owned it that they consider him a son. When he returned to Scotland, he worked in various commercial art studios, learning the basics of his trade. Comics returned to his life when he was in his 20s, when a colleague urged him to send samples into D.C. Thomson, which led to work on the *Commando* pocket library books. "I worked on these for a couple of years, then returned to France. A friend of mine was opening up a print works and asked me to come over and take charge of the design work, which I did. I was heavily into painting at that time and had several reasonably successful exhibitions."

Did he see much of the *Bande Desinee* scene in France?

"Yes, but it didn't make a great impression because at that time I still didn't realise that this was what I wanted to do. My mind was more focussed on my painting."

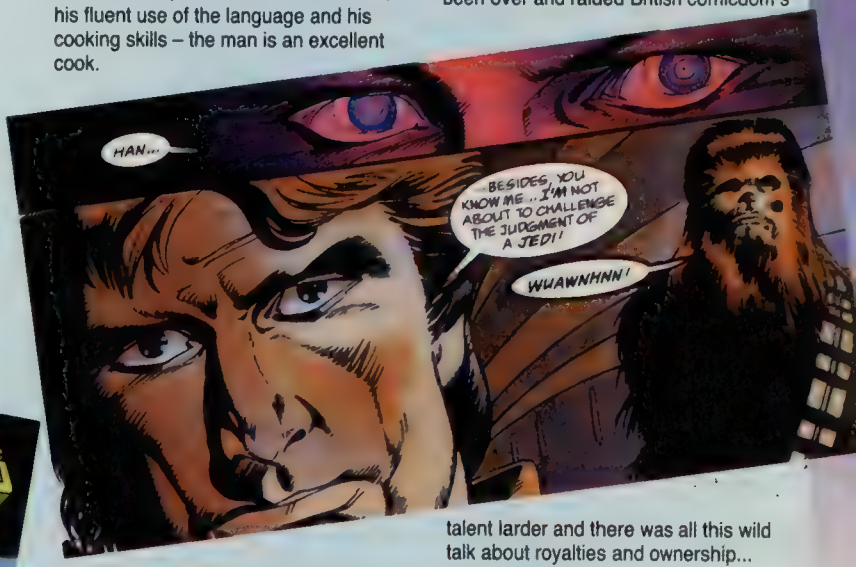
"A LOT OF COLOURS GET STORED UP IN YOUR MIND . . . I FINALLY GOT TO EXPERIMENT IN LIGHT AND DARKNESS"

Cam spent almost ten years in France, and carries several legacies of his time there, not the least of which are his fluent use of the language and his cooking skills – the man is an excellent cook.

AT TOO! OH NO! HE THINKS HE BELONGS WITH MASTER LUKE!
STOP HIM, SOMEONE PLEASE
NO TIME, LUKE WILL HAVE TO SAVE ARTOO WHILE HE'S BUSY GAINING HUMBLE!
GET ON BOARD, THREEPIO!

'Fighting Mann' and a host of other things. Then I moved over to *2000AD* doing 'V.C.'s' and 'Rogue Trooper'. The thing I had going for me in those days was speed – I was turning out a lot of pages every week. While in France I had married and become a father; my wife and I split up and I returned home with my two sons, so I would sit up all night drawing comics, put the two boys out to school, try and catch some sleep, get up in time for their return home, then when they went off to bed, start work again. That way I could produce nine or ten pages a week."

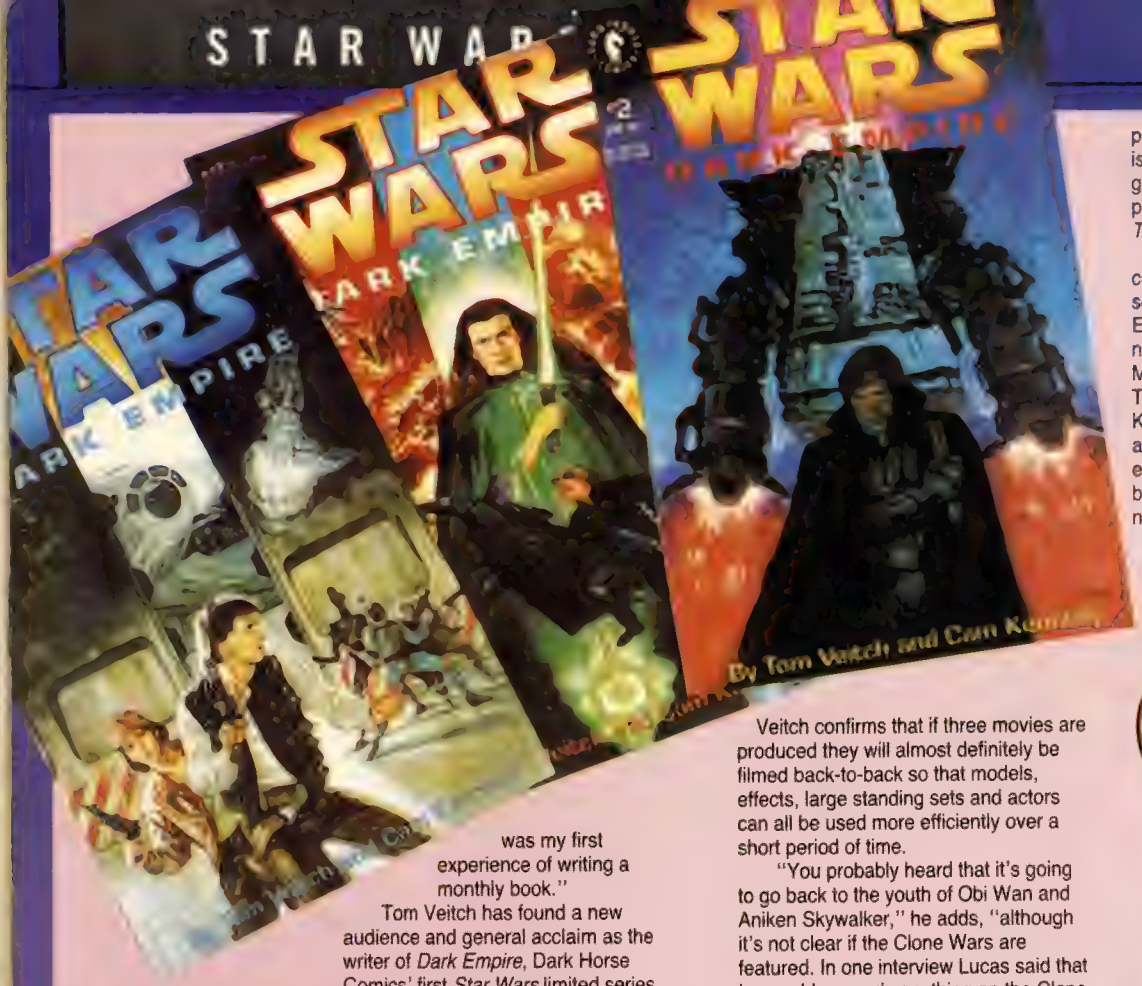
Cam moved on to Judge Dredd in *2000AD* and 'Ektryn' for *Warrior*, and from there to America and the 12 issue *Outcasts* series for DC. "They had just been over and raided British comicdom's talent larder and there was all this wild talk about royalties and ownership...



"It wasn't until I came back to Glasgow that I decided to have another go at comics and began to look at *2000AD* and *Battle Action*. I knocked up a sample page in about a day and sent it down to *Battle* and received a script by return post.

"I worked for them for some time, doing 'Clash of the Guards', 'Wardog',

"Alan Grant and John Wagner wanted to get into the American market. They called me and told me this idea they had which was the *Outcasts*. Then they came up to Orkney and kicked the idea around until we had something to show DC. So Alan and John sent this off and



TOM VEITCH

"THEY ARE A DISTILLATION OF ALL THE FANTASY AND HEROIC ENTERTAINMENT FOR DECADES"

was my first experience of writing a monthly book."

Tom Veitch has found a new audience and general acclaim as the writer of *Dark Empire*, Dark Horse Comics' first *Star Wars* limited series. Why did Veitch think that the Dark Horse series captured the spirit of the movies so well?

"The problem with the Marvel series was that you had people writing it who were writing a whole lot of other things, so the Marvel universe was leaking into the Star Wars universe and it became just another book. Both Cam Kennedy and I are *Star Wars* nuts. If you look at Cam's work, you can tell. When I first saw the first film, I was sucked right into it; now they're on video, I've seen them four, five hundred times. I still watch them. They are so layered that you pick up different things each time."

Now that it is complete, *Dark Empire* will be collected, first as a limited hardcover edition of 1,000 copies, then in a mass market trade paperback next summer. Both editions will include extra material from Cam Kennedy's sketchbooks, and possibly some new text material. Veitch is convinced that there is a huge audience for new *Star Wars* stories.

"Just look at what happened with Timothy Zahn's novels," he says. "They were at the top of the best-sellers lists in America. Star Wars is really taking off again in the States, with a tremendous anticipation that there are going to be more films."

Could he add anything to the speculation about the new movie projects?

"There should be an interview with George Lucas in a forthcoming *LucasFilm Fan Magazine*, when he should give the definitive statement on when the films will be coming out. The last thing we were told was that as soon as he finishes filming the current series of *Young Indiana Jones*, he'll go right into *Star Wars*."

Veitch confirms that if three movies are produced they will almost definitely be filmed back-to-back so that models, effects, large standing sets and actors can all be used more efficiently over a short period of time.

"You probably heard that it's going to go back to the youth of Obi Wan and Aniken Skywalker," he adds, "although it's not clear if the Clone Wars are featured. In one interview Lucas said that he would never do anything on the Clone Wars, that it would be an off-stage event that happens between the third and fourth chapters. But he apparently changes his mind day to day."

TALES OF THE JEDI

What further *Star Wars* comics will he be working on?

"What we have planned right now is that Cam Kennedy will do two sequels, each one of which will be six issues. Then we start a new series called *Tales Of The Jedi* which I'll be writing and several other artists will be working on. We submitted a proposal to LucasFilm that we wanted to tell stories about the ancient Jedi in the past. The licensing people that we usually communicate with said, 'Well, we'll show this to George, but he's never approved anything like this'. So they sent it into him and he said OK. This is a whole virgin territory that hasn't been explored at all. Dark Horse has got essentially exclusive permission to look into that."

Tales Of The Jedi, which will begin with a serialised story in the anthology *Dark Horse Presents*, will cover a period long before the events told in the existing *Star Wars* movie trilogy.

"We have established that both hyper-space travel and the Jedi have existed for around 25,000 years," explains Veitch. "That's why the old republic had come into existence; because of the invention of hyper-space engines, travel and communications became possible between the planets. We could go back anywhere over the 25,000 years, eventually to the very beginning, but right now we're going back about 4,000 years.

"David Roach is doing one story for *Tales Of The Jedi*, and next summer we'll publish a limited series, probably five issues. We'll also be doing a hardcover graphic album, which Cam will be painting, in the same format as *Aliens: Tribes*."

Apart from Star Wars, Veitch is currently working on a *Kamandi* limited series, due next summer under DC's Elseworlds banner and illustrated by newcomer Frank Gomez, a 22-year-old Mexican artist discovered by Mike Carlin. The series will adhere to the spirit of Jack Kirby's original, and although the talking animals will not be featured, their existence is not specifically denied. The bunker from which Kamandi takes his name (Command D) is now part of a

DON'T WORRY, LITTLE JEDI...I WILL NOT HARM YOU
INDEED, I WILL TEACH YOU THINGS YOU HAVE NEVER IMAGINED. I WILL SHOW YOU THE REAL POWER A JEDI CAN WIELD!

CAM KENNEDY

TESTED BY THE DARK WILL THAT HAS ENSLAVED A GALAXY, THE FORCE SUDDENLY GROWS STRONG IN LEIA...
LONG AGO I FOUND MY FLESH COULD NOT WITHSTAND THE AWESOME DEMANDS OF THE DARK SIDE...
THE GREAT EMPEROR PALPATINE DISCOVERED HE WAS DYING.
MY BODY WAS LITERALLY CONSUMED BY THE ENERGIES I HAD RELEASED...
FORTUNATELY... FORTUNATELY THERE WAS A WAY... A ROAD TO ETERNAL LIFE--

waited to hear from them...and waited ...and waited. Time dragged on and we heard nothing.

"John Wagner suggested that someone should go and see them, and as I'd never been to New York before I said 'I'm your man!' and ended up at DC's offices looking for Denny O'Neill who was the guy in charge of the *Outcasts* proposal. I was heading into Denny's office as he was heading out, and the only thing I could think of to say was 'Denny O'Neill, I'm Cam Kennedy and I've come over two thousand miles to see you.' And Denny said: 'Good for you!' and walked off.

"I reminded Denny of this of this a couple of years ago and for the life of him he couldn't remember it, but we have become very good friends since then."

Outcasts was the first time Cam's pencils had been inked by another hand. How did he feel when he saw the first pages?

"Well, in the nicest way possible, it felt like sending your child to school for the first time, all shiny and clean in his new uniform, and when he comes home someone's written graffiti all over him!

"I don't mean it in a nasty way. I think Steve Montano did a fairly good job on the inks. This was just my first reaction to someone else inking my work."

Cam went from there to draw *The Spectre*, and then to *The Light and Darkness War* where he teamed up with Tom Veitch for the first time. It was also his first chance to work in fully painted colour for many years.

"It related in many ways to what I had been doing in France. A lot of colours get stored up in your mind, certain mood colours that I'd wanted to use for some time. I finally got to experiment in *Light and Darkness*. I decided to use watercolour because I didn't want it to look mechanical in any way."

After the science fiction of *Light and Darkness War*, a change of pace could be found in his Punisher graphic novel, *Blood on the Moors*, released earlier this year. Being set in Scotland meant that Cam approached the character with a different outlook to most artists who have worked on the series: "My main concern was to draw the Punisher a little more realistically, not quite so musclebound and not brimming with machine guns and ammo belts for the simple reason that the Scottish police tend to arrest you pretty swiftly if you run around the streets dressed like that. Marvel were very good about it and gave me a lot of leeway.

"I enjoyed it because it was set in Scotland, I was working with a great editor, Nel Yomtov, and working with John and Alan is always great fun."

Still to appear at the time of writing is the last episode of *Dark Empire*, but the first five issues have already had a fantastic response from fans. The series came about following some serious wooing from Dark Horse: "For various reasons I kept saying no until Mike Richardson called me up. I eventually said yes. I had problems doing *Star Wars* because I didn't want to draw a strip that was just a series of traced photographs. Luckily Lucas Film allowed me a certain amount of leeway with how the main characters looked and they seem very happy with what I'm doing. I have heard that George Lucas likes the artwork a great deal. Tom Veitch called and told me that they were bringing out a manual containing all the incidental characters, aliens and warriors and such that I've drawn for the series, the 'extras' who pass by or appear in the backgrounds. They've all been adopted into the *Star Wars* legend."

His latest work is on a four issue mini-series starring DC's main man, Lobo, written once again by Alan Grant: "It will have a few surprises but I can't really say any more than that, although I will say I'm enjoying it a great deal. It's not as rigid and limiting as the *Star Wars* stuff: on *Star Wars* everything had to be approved by Lucas Film and above that the *Star Wars* characters and their universe are so well known that there is very little room for innovation. With Lobo almost anything goes and I am managing to slip in a few caricatures of friends and the like into the cast of characters."

CAM KENNEDY

"I WANTED TO BE A PLUMBER. THEN, LATER ON, I WANTED TO BE A COWBOY"

Another project is his work with the French master of surreal science fiction, Moebius (Jean Giraud). Cam's connection with the artist came about through a holiday in America: "A couple of years ago my wife and I swapped houses with Charles Vess and his wife. They took a vacation in our place in Orkney and we went to their house, and I got invited to a convention in New York State; I travelled there with Steve Bissette and a couple of other guys, and while at the convention bumped into Jean-Marc Lofficier. I speak French, so Jean-Marc and I were chatting away, then Jean Giraud turned up. Now, while Moebius is at these conventions in America, 99% of the time he has to speak English; as I'm sure you know speaking in a second language gets tiring after a while, and I think Jean found it refreshing to speak in his mother tongue. So we started gabbing and just really hit it off. When I came back to Scotland I got a call from him asking me if I would like to do some of the *Airtight Garage*. Eric Shanower and Jerry Bingham are doing some of these but Jean wanted me to pencil and ink four books about Major Gruber.

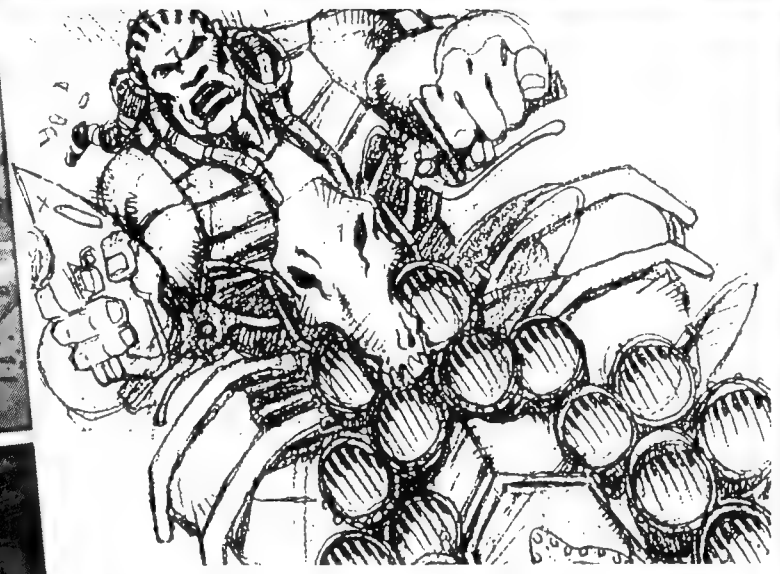
"The Major Gruber books are not only being published by Epic but also coming out as albums in Europe from Les Humanoids which I'm really looking forward to."

For once, Cam will not be colouring his own work: "In fact I'm looking for a colourist for not only the *Garage* books but for the Lobo as well. There are a couple of girls who have worked on Moebius' books from Epic who are very good. They have that European feel to their work, and that's what I'm looking for."

I gave Cam a call on his birthday recently and found him in very good spirits despite being forced to test a bottle of Irish whiskey which he suspected had gone off. He tells me that after finishing Lobo and the *Airtight Garage* he will be doing a second *Star Wars* mini-series, and the reaction to his Lobo work from DC has been so positive there might be more to come from that direction also. As I said at the very beginning, he's a very busy man.

CW

--WE'RE ENTERING THE DEEP CORE SECURITY ZONE...
BYSS HAS ACKNOWLEDGED OUR APPROACH - THE WHOLE PLANET IS PROTECTED BY HEAVY DUTY SHIELD GENERATORS
KIND OF LIKE THAT SYSTEM WE TOOK OUT ON THE ENDOR MOON!
AND YOU'RE CLEAR TO LAND, RIGHT? TAKE US DOWN!
OH DEAR... I DO HOPE WE'RE NOT TOO LATE TO SAVE ARTOO!
...RUDER... WE ...ATION OF YOUR ...CODE... THE ...IMETER WILL OPEN ...2 SECONDS
...SIBLE WINDOW OPENS ...THE INTRUDER THROUGH ...ARY SHIELDS, SLAVE II ...OF HYPERSPACE!
BOBA FETT!--WHAT DID I TELL YA? THAT SLIME-SUCKER NEVER GIVES UP!
MOVE IT, SALLA! WE'VE GOT A BOUNTY HUNTER ON OUR TAIL!
PULL UP, FETT! TH' NAVICOMP SAYS THIS PLANET'S PROTECTED BY SECURITY SHIELDS!
THEIR SHIP'S GOIN' THROUGH... SLAVE II WILL FOLLOW THEM IN-- BEFORE THE SHIELDS CAN CLOSE!



TOM VEITCH

continent-wide technological web, controlled by a computer that runs all the life-support systems. The most recent holocaust, which Superman had tried to prevent, was in fact started by this computer.

"Most of the people in the world were killed," says Veitch. "Superman, depressed, just went off, about fifty, a hundred years ago. The mother-computer sends Kamandi to find and kill Superman, who she still remembers as the enemy."

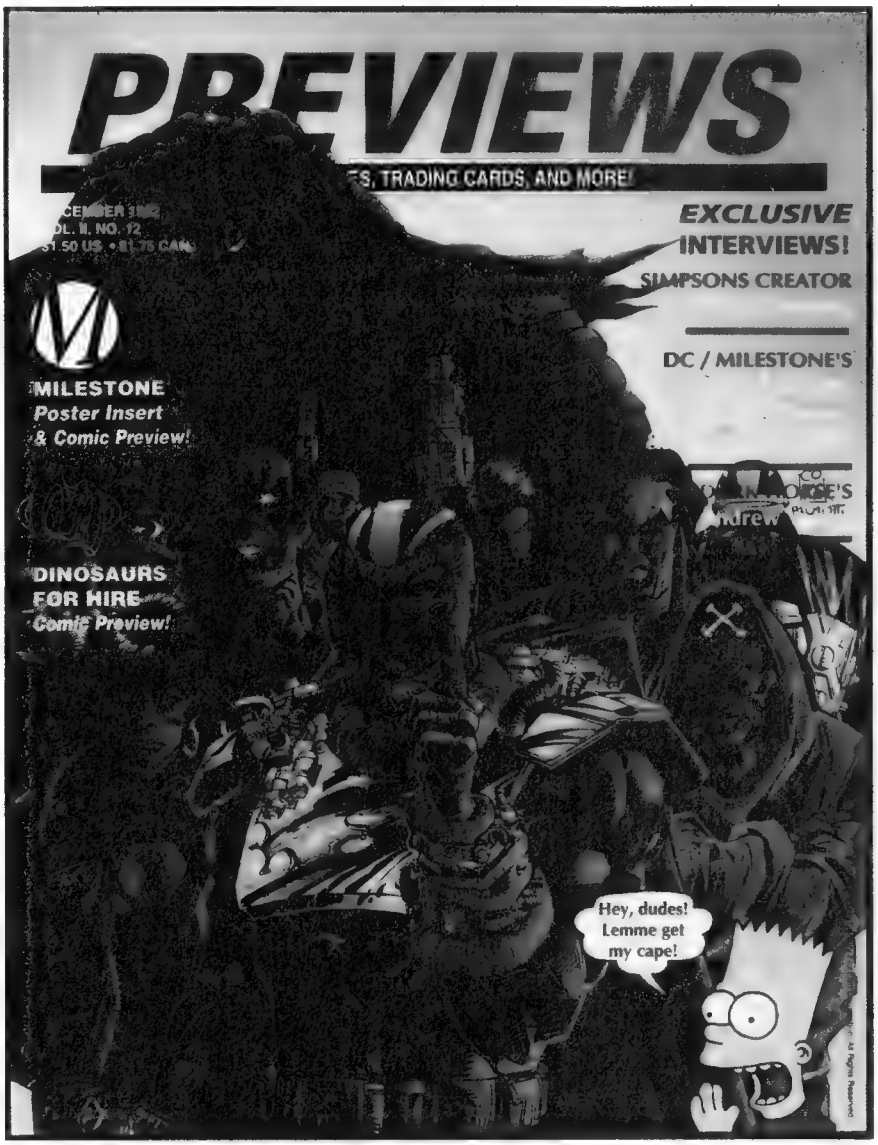
What other projects are in the future?

"There's something from DC's Vertigo, but I can't give any details just yet. I was working on a Batman story, for *Legends Of The Dark Knight*, but that's had to go way on the back burner because of the commitment to *Star Wars*. I've been so immersed in it I have *Star Wars* coming out of my ears."

As someone so totally involved with *Star Wars*, how would he sum up the lasting appeal of the movies, across all ages and nationalities?

"They are a distillation of all the fantasy and heroic entertainment for decades. Some people say, well, it's all just a trick, Lucas took this, that and the other from all over the place, from war pictures, movie serials, comic books, but it's like he got back to the core of it all, the archetypes. From my point of view, his stuff is purer, truer, more alive than a lot of his sources. That's the secret."

CW



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BRIAN BOLLAND

BRIAN BOLLAND FIRST BEGAN DRAWING COMICS OVER TWENTY YEARS AGO FOR VARIOUS SMALL-PRESS AND UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS, INCLUDING THE NOTORIOUS *OZ*. IN 1974 HE WORKED BRIEFLY WITH DAVE GIBBONS ON THE BLACK SUPER-HERO CHARACTER *POWERMAN* BEFORE MOVING ON TO ASSIGNMENTS AS DIVERSE AS THE SYNDICATED JEFF HAWKE NEWSPAPER STRIP AND A HAMMER MOVIE ADAPTATION IN *HOUSE OF HORROR*. WHAT INFLUENCES HAD PREPARED THE YOUNG BRIAN FOR SUPER-HERO, SCIENCE FICTION AND HORROR STRIPS, ASKED OUR ACE REPORTER, LANCE RICKMAN.

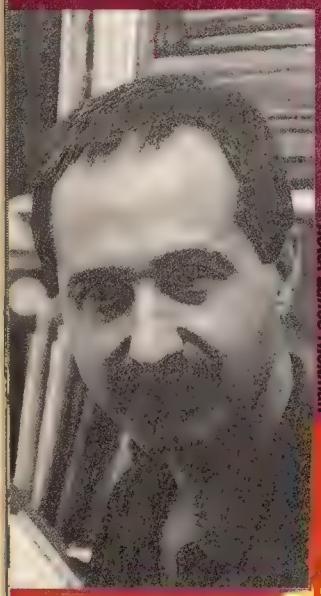
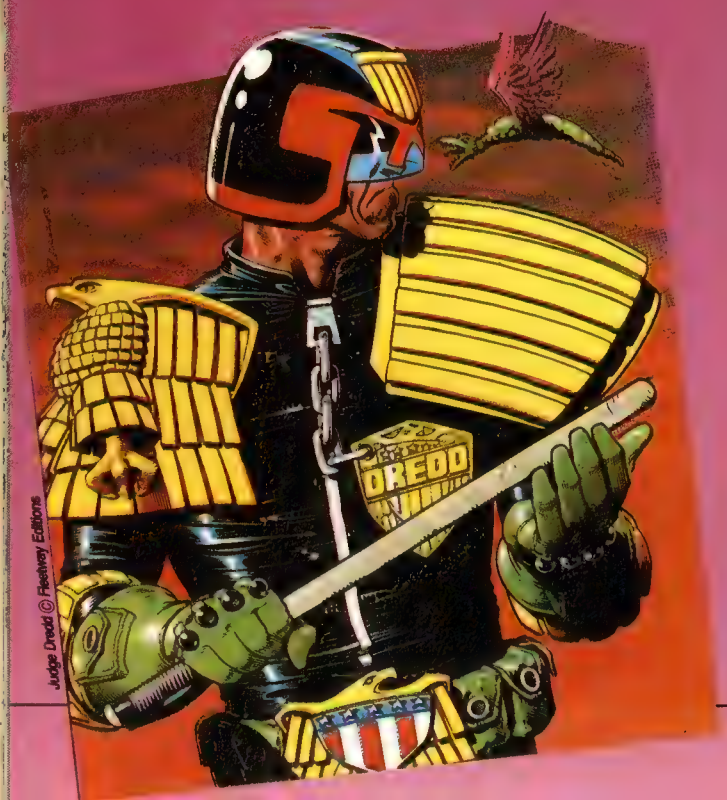


Photo: Lance Rickman

...SAID THE ACTRESS TO THE BISHOP...

"I was a great* Valiant *reader and fan of Jesus Blasco's black and white work, including 'The Steel Claw'. There was a sense of space, you could look into his panels and see an entire environment. I suppose he was a photo-realist; there was one story that was set in the dock-lands of New York, and he managed to get the faces of the low-lifes hanging around the docks and bars looking so authentic."

His early interest in American material began with an issue of DC's western title *Tomahawk*: "It had a dinosaur on the cover, and I was mad-keen on them; any DC monster book that had a creature marauding over a village was OK by me. My drawing style, especially what I'm doing on covers now, is rooted in pre-Marvel DC comics. I'm trying to create the kind of simple images that you'd find on *My Greatest Adventure*, or *House Of Secrets*, circa 1959 or '60. People at DC tend to think I'm a latter-day Curt Swan, who did beautiful work on *Jimmy Olsen*: some of his nicest work was just ordinary characters, sitting around. Gil Kane's early '60s DC work influenced me, I think, and then Neal Adams, Although he brought this kind of dynamic realism to everything, I always found it puzzling how Adams managed to make everything so convincing when there was no rhyme or reason to his inking. It's very exciting to look at, because it's undeliberated, just sort of scribbled on and it works. I found it difficult to do that, partly because I was learning how to use a brush, and you need to use a pen for that. Nestor Redondo's *Rima The Jungle Girl*, with those precise feathered lines on people's bodies, impressed me no end."

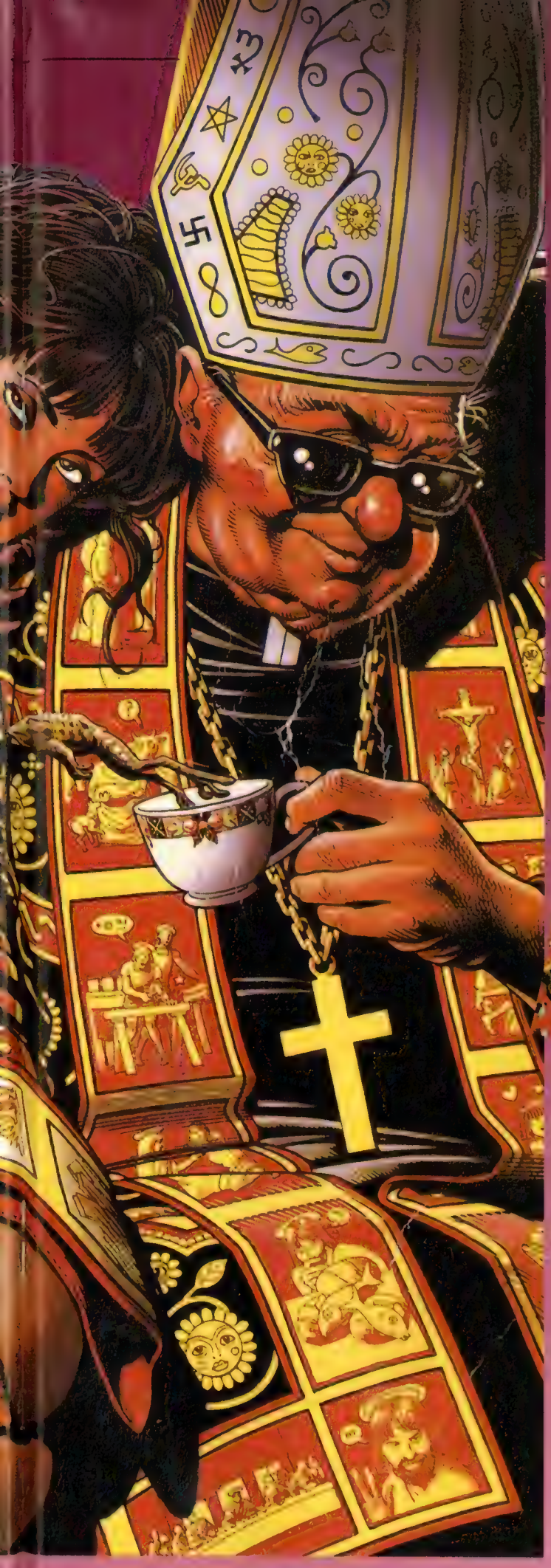


Judge Dredd © Fleetway Editions

Bolland first came to the attention of a wider British audience through his work in *2000AD*, and his version of Judge Dredd, mainly drawn between 1978 and 1981, is still one of the most definitive, distinctive and imitated of the character's incarnations. In fact, his Dredd illustrations are still frequently re-used for posters, advertising and covers.

"Judge Dredd was done at a time when we didn't have any reprint rights, didn't even get our artwork back," he says. "We just took the deal that was offered. A lot of people thought that it was unfair, because we had no choice, but we knew the terms when we agreed to do the work. We knew that they could reprint it a thousand times and that we wouldn't get anything out of it, and since we knew, we have no right to whinge about it, really. The only problem arose in that some of the subsequent Judge Dredd work I did was not done under that particular contract but was still liberally used. All the things I did outside of the IPC contract were assumed to be also covered. Sometimes I look at a piece of Judge Dredd work and think, that wasn't done for the *2000AD* comic, that was done for the *Madness* album, or Eagle Comics, so

The Actress & The Bishop © Brian Bolland



really they had no right to make a T-shirt out of it. But it's so complicated, it would have been a full-time occupation to unravel it. Nowadays they do actually send out royalties for work that's reprinted."

While on the subject, I asked how Brian feels about the appropriation of comic images by pop-art painters like Lichtenstein. One such painting, *Twist And Shout* by Jerry Cairns, combines one of Brian's Judge Death panels with a Bernie Wrightson horror illustration.

"A lot of comic artists get really upset about it. It doesn't actually piss me off as much as it does some people; at least he's copied my work quite accurately. It does seem a rather cheap trick, but I can understand the whole idea of taking from a popular medium; it's the putting something into a different context which is the whole point of the exercise. So I think it's a valid practice."

Most American fans first discovered Bolland through his work on Mike Barr's *Camelot 3000*, and his contribution to *Batman 400*, although his phenomenally successful 1988 collaboration with Alan Moore, *The Killing Joke*, secured his reputation as one of the major modern super-hero illustrators. Although he maintains that he hadn't been a Batman fan, the artwork of *The Killing Joke* contains many stylistic references to the *Batman* stories of the forties and fifties.

"Everybody who drew Batman in those days was supposed to be Bob Kane, but the one artist that really stood out was Dick Sprang," says Brian. "His work had a surrealism about it, and his sense of scale was so strange. He was the big typewriter man, the giant props. And his work looks good today; the composition of blacks and whites, his dramatic perspective, all stand out well.

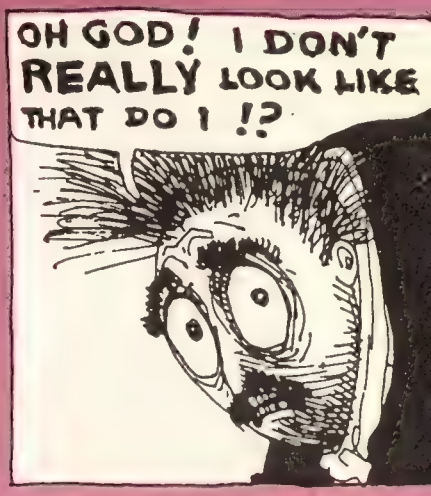
"When Neal Adams came along, and drew it in a completely different way, it ushered in a period when all kinds of very good artists were drawing Batman and he became an interesting character to draw again. So I thought, why not incorporate some of the elements of what was good before, a bit of Neal Adams but also the Dick Sprang? And just as a tribute to him I'd swipe some of his things, Dick Sprang's Batmobile drawn in a post-Neal Adams way. There was a fascination in trying to blend the old and the new. I was never a Batman fan as a kid, but later on in life, as a professional, I realised there was so much in the visual world of Batman. It's almost German expressionist cinema."

Brian's occasional comic stories and covers through this period were all rendered in his distinctive clear line style so it came as a shock to many when, in 1987, he began to produce something radically different. Mr. Mamoulian recorded the quirky, introspective activities, thoughts and fantasies of a lonely, lustful, frightened and frustrated character, and was drawn in a loose, scratchy cartoon style far removed from his usual pristine line-work.

"The obligation to do it well is the overriding factor in my work, and I was frustrated and bored with my drawing style. I try to put a lot of finish into it, it's laborious and I'm notoriously slow. It occurred to me that when I was a young kid, and nobody was looking at my work,

I enjoyed drawing, so after *The Killing Joke* I though I'd have a stab at drawing something without pencilling, just knocking out a basic strip for myself, not even showing anybody."

Why was Mamoulian such a deeply sad character?



ON FACES SMILES
WHERE SNEERS AND FROWNS HAD BEEN.
THE BISHOP SPOKE TO MRS. SO
FROM NUMBER 54.
SHE SAID "MY WORD, I DO BELIEVE
I'VE SEEN YOUR FACE BEFORE."

The Actress & The Bishop © Brian Bolland

Fun © Brian Bolland

"Well, he's me. I certainly identify more with him than with any of the super hero characters I've been drawing. 'The Portrait', for instance, actually happened to me on a flight to New York. I was talking to two American girls, getting on famously, and one of them did a sketch of me. I found it so unflattering, I became depressed and couldn't speak to them anymore. What I began to find was that although each page was an idea in its own right, I began to enjoy the interrelationship between them, and it became useful to create an expanding cast."

One increasingly important member of the cast, the aristocratic party-girl Bubbles Bourbasch, becomes the object of an elaborate fantasy relationship for the besotted Marmoulian.

"I bought a few issues of *The Tatler* and the society pages feature photographs of drunken lords and ladies, a world utterly different from this wretched little man's life, and yet I could see how he would become fascinated by it. The relationship between the two characters continues, and later the real Bubbles Bourbasch turns up as well, so you get confused about whether you have the real or the fantasy image."

Nearly all of the strips are tremendously constrained by a rigid panel layout.

"I don't have a great deal of sympathy with designers, who use composition and design elements merely to please the eye. Every factor involved in a comic strip really should be at the service of the story. I didn't want to draw any attention to pretty compositions, so the grid was useful but after forty-five pages it can become a little jarring on the eye, so I did occasionally break it up with larger panels."

Some of the Marmoulian pages have been obscurely published and others not at all, and Brian insists that he needs ninety pages to finish the saga. Both Dark Horse and Titan have expressed interest in collecting them into book form. Meanwhile, his forays into more personal comics, like those of Robert Crumb, have meant that he has occasionally appeared as a character in his own strips. "The reason I wear a moustache is so I can caricature myself easily," he says. In *1987, Speakeasy 79* featured one such strip, explained as the first page of a work-in-progress. Was there any sign of page two, I ventured?

"No," he laughs. "The idea of the strip was that I would be getting ready to write this great story and accumulating a gang of characters, who all start arguing with me and interrupting, saying, 'Yes, but I wouldn't say that, would I?'. One of the great fears about committing yourself to three hundred pages of anything is that all the while you're drawing, say, Gotham City, you'd like to be drawing something from *The Arabian Nights*, or funny people with big feet, and you can't. I wanted to improvise a story, one page at a time, like Moebius's *Airtight Garage*. That really is a joy to read, because you can tell he's having such fun doing it. He does a few pages, then gives himself a problem to solve, then comes and deals with it the next day. It may seem rather aimless to read, but I get a lot of pleasure from the pleasure he must have got out of doing it."

"MY DRAWING STYLE, ESPECIALLY WHAT I'M DOING ON COVERS NOW, IS ROOTED IN PRE-MARVEL DC COMICS"

The debut of the British anthology *A1* in 1989 gave Brian a further opportunity to produce solo work, but this time he returned to what he calls "my meticulous style", creating a strip based on the traditional British catch-phrase of 'The Actress And The Bishop'. The characters had previously appeared in a portfolio Brian had produced for a French publisher, but why that particular couple?

"I remember thinking that if I were to do a graphic novel completely of my own devising, there's a sort of barrier to becoming interested in the characters. But The Actress and The Bishop are two mythical characters that everybody's heard of, but who've never had their own book."

Written in whimsical couplets, the strips have an old fashioned and very English charm despite the unexplained and anachronistic characters that often intrude.

"They're a very boring, suburban couple," explains Brian. "But then they have parties where lunatic people turn up, like the man in PVC. I just wanted to throw in a lot of unexplained elements, and I like the fact that the man in PVC can just be there, doing very ordinary things." In the second strip, a character dressed entirely in rubber and wearing a gas mask, is among the guests at the couple's party. "This was before *Twin Peaks*, but it's sort of David Lynchy, isn't it? Strange dislocating elements."

How do others react to this very English strip?

"One's just appeared in an Italian magazine, where a reviewer compared it to Lewis Carroll - but I was reminded that the comparison was of the translation, not my writing."

Only two Actress And Bishop stories have been published, both in A1, although Brian is currently working on a third, 18-page story. "The Actress And The Bishop And The Thing In The Shed."

These days, Brian's mainstream work consists almost entirely of covers, which he tends to draw with the last two or three in mind, almost as sequential art. He also believes that people underestimate the importance of the cover artist.

"I have a collection of old DC comics, and I get a great delight from just pulling one out and looking at the cover, they are beautiful things to look at. And while I can tell in people's tone of voice that they don't consider comic-book covers to be real work, the *Animal Man* covers are the longest continuous, uninterrupted run of anything I've ever done, four and a half years. One piece of artwork a month seems to be the kind of schedule I can keep to."

After the experience of *Animal Man 1*, in which technical difficulties resulted in very uneven colour reproduction, Brian now colours all his own covers. He airbrushes the ink line-drawing with Doc Martin's concentrated water colours, a technique which gives smooth, even results but is very time-consuming. And Brian's meticulous line-work has itself caused problems for modern reproduction techniques.

"They had a lot of trouble with my *Animal Man* covers, because there's often a lot of fur and texture, and the computers deal with the colour. If the dot of white surrounded by cross-hatched lines is too small, the computer doesn't see it and doesn't put any colour on it. A lot of covers had flecks of white, where this had happened, so now my covers are sent to Murphy Anderson's studios to be hand-separated, the way they were

before computers came in, which I get a certain satisfaction from. I'm a bit of a Luddite when it comes to computers."

Recently, Brian also became the regular cover-artist on *Wonder Woman*, who he had previously drawn in a 1988 annual. He says that he intends to provide covers for the book for "fifty issues or so", but what attracted him to what is usually regarded as a low-interest title in the first place?

"I find it a very unattractive proposition drawing a character who has been drawn as well as you can imagine by a lot of good people. If I don't feel that I can raise the standard a little bit, then there's no great incentive to do it. In the case of Wonder Woman, I felt that I could make her look better than she currently looked, although I did like Jill Thompson's artwork. I think she's good. I've never been able to figure out why Wonder Woman hasn't a more popular image: she is one of the great three or four original characters. I thought of it as a bit of a challenge to present her as an icon on the covers of the books, as best I could. And I do actually *enjoy* drawing women."

Bolland's talent for rendering attractive women has lead to inevitable criticism, although Brian isn't defensive on the subject. "Obviously I have to be conscientious about the way I portray women in comics, and as a person who enjoys drawing women, I have to do it with a certain degree of thought," he explained. "Quite often I know I'm crossing a line which I find difficult to defend. While I was at the convention, a couple of professionals had a go at me for a *Wonder Woman* cover I did where she's chained up, with a metal collar around her neck, and with a black eye. What they found objectionable was that she was in what they considered to be a sexy pose. So you have the juxtaposition of the image of violence against a woman with the sexiness of her position. She has a black eye throughout the story, so it was difficult to draw her without it, those were the facts of what happened in the issue. She was supposed to be having a pretty rough time of it, but still retaining her dignity."

Brian does make a strong distinction between his illustrations and the specifically titillating style of pin-ups. "In 'Good Girl' art, the woman is posed purely for the delectation of the predominantly male viewer. I think the figure should be drawn in the way that the character, if she were real, really would be behaving. She wouldn't be turning her best side towards the viewer just to amuse us, she would be getting on with business, and doing it in a very self-determining way. I find I look at fashion mags a lot, and I assume that women don't find the images of women in them as offensive as others. I would like those few women who read comics to look at my *Wonder Woman* covers and somehow see a woman they could identify with. Let's name names. Dave Stevens is technically a very good artist. The way he draws women comes from a pin-up tradition and he does it very well, but his women tend to have vacuous expressions, and I feel it's important for them to appear to be people, with strong personalities. That's my manifesto. I'm sure I'm getting it all completely wrong, and I'm going to be hauled over the coals."

"THERE ARE VISUAL IMAGES THAT I'D LIKE TO PUT ON PAPER WHICH ONLY I KNOW ABOUT. NO-ONE ELSE HAS ACCESS TO THE INSIDE OF MY HEAD"

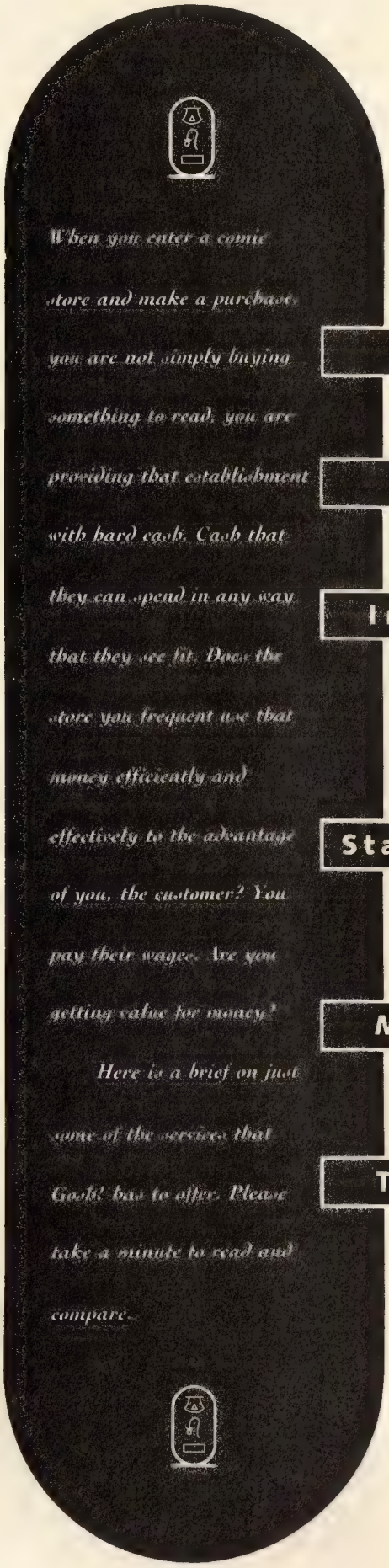
Although universally acknowledged as one of the very best in the business, Brian still finds that he is constantly refining his style.

"The organisation of blacks and whites is something that comic strip artists are always trying to understand, in order to make an image," he says. What does he think of the current trend for thin line-work with often no blacks at all?

"I think as we see more and more colour work people will lose the knack of knowing how to do it. People like Warren Pleece can do it, and Joe Quesada. And David Mazzucchelli is one of the greats. One so young shouldn't be so good, but he is."

Brian also has no hesitation in picking his own nomination for comic master.

"Alex Toth, who's boiled down all the extraneous nonsense of comics to the essential ingredients. People tell you his work is very simple; well it's *not* simple. All the knowledge of comics is somehow encompassed in those apparently simple strokes. He twists his characters around, looking at them from all different directions; *Bravo For Adventure* was one of his masterpieces. With his minimal style, Toth is still challenging the borders of the panels, whereas someone like Hugo Pratt – although he's a great figure in the European comic scene – has his characters standing squarely in the centre of the panel in profile all



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BRIAN BOLLAND STRIPOGRAPHY

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New Zones of Bareness/The Sponge/Break A Few Hearts (in *Escape 15*, 1988)
Coincidence?/Goodnight/Fun (in *Escape 16*, 1988)
Have A Nice Day (in *Escape 17*, 1989)
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The Actress & the Bishop Throw A Party (in *A1 #3*, Mar 1990)
Mr X: Windows (in *A1 #2*, Sep 1989. 1 panel only)
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the time."

And was there anything Brian was anxious to try in the future?

"I think the thing I want to do most is to write my own stuff," he says. "It's not that I don't think there aren't good writers about, but there are visual images that I'd like to put on paper which only I know about. No-one else has access to the inside of my head. That's not the same as saying, 'I'm a great writer, I can write better stories than anybody else', it just gives the artist more opportunity."

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ANDREW CURRIE

"John Freeman said Marvel may do a sword and sorcery comic, and could be interested in blowing the dust off* Stormwatcher,*" Andrew Currie told me, reminiscing over the '80s mini-series he'd illustrated for Acme Press/Eclipse over Alan Cowsill and Ian Abbinnett's scripts.

From Barbarians in an almost sit-com scenario he careered towards D.C. Thomson's science fiction digest comic of the old school,* Starblazer *due to a suggestion from Pat Mills who'd told the artist it'd be some time before he could personally work with him. "Pat was right," he says, before reinforcing the statement adamantly, "Pat Mills is always right!

"Looking back, the work I did was pretty bad really. All they wanted was clear storytelling. It was two panels a page, very limited, but I think it taught me a lot.

This period of activity was followed by drawing Ricky Kilkane for *Deadline*, and his first colour strip in the Halloween issue of *Revolver* – the *Revolver Horror Special*.

"I was kicking around and not really getting that much work – looking back at the time it wasn't surprising!

When his *Stormwatcher* collaborators became editors for the Games Workshop comic, *Warhammer*, he too became involved, although persistent management changes of mind about the title's direction meant little actual physical work was produced. "I actually ended up drawing four pages of a 'Deathwing' story which had been written by Bill King." Fortunately there was staff illustration work to be had at the company and he's also kept in contact with Mills, who invited him to draw 'Rollerbeast' for *Toxic!*.

"It was an okay strip. I was fairly pleased with the first three pages but they stopped paying us, so you could say my enthusiasm waned after that." Not too surprising!

"Pat got me to try out on *Witch*. He took my stuff over to Nel Yomtov in New York, and Nel really liked it." Originally illustrated by Glenn Fabry as a newspaper strip called 'Scatha the Witch', the series has lain in wait at Marvel's Epic for a replacement more years than one cares to remember, plu when Currie was chosen, "It went on hold for a while because they weren't sure if it was going to be cost effective They decided it would be, just that the have to restructure a three part series into a five part series, with a slightly lo page count." It's now due the latter pa '93.

"Pat said to Nel 'Look this is going t be a long drawn out thing so if you cou give Andrew anything while he's waitin and Nel gave me this Iron Man story." was featured in the '92 *Iron Man Annu* "Nel actually phoned me up a couple weeks ago and asked me to do anothe one, but fortunately I've been too busy

Aside from *Witch*, most of Currie's energies will be spent on *Super Soldie* part of Marvel UK's Heroswarm titles.

"That actually came about becaus in *Toxic!* they had this 'New Kids on th Block' page where you were supposed do a self-portrait and answer a few questions as wittily as possible. Micha (Bennent) really liked the self-portrait. looked vaguely similar to Frank Miller's work on *Sin City*," prior to that series appearing coincidently, "I think Michae into that kind of dark, and heavily black work. He rang me up and said we shou do something together."

The series finds lead character, Joseph as the remaining member of Britain's variant on the Captain Americ formula who wakes from a cryogenic sleep to find his memory wiped and wanting some straight answers as to why.

"It's an ongoing series which I'll ju be pencilling. I hope Cam Smith will at least ink the first cover. I've known him far back as when I started at Harrier so it'd really be nice to do something with him."

Via former Acme editor, Richard Ashford he secured a *Conan* cover an "will be doing a portfolio", but *Killing Machine* sold to Tundra "was one of those to fall under the axe due to all th financial cutbacks." Even so, the UK branch offered him an Axel Pressbutto story, scripted by creator, Pedro Henry

"The first time I did it was a pretty poor result and Garry Leach spent abo an hour and a half critiquing the work. was kind of shattering at the time but h took a lot of time out to tell me what he thought of it, and I went on to do a sec version which I felt very confident abou

The results being a nifty blend of energetic mischievousness and blood-curdling mayhem which Currie will probably be casually deriding in his no familiar manner six months down the road. Perfectionists, don't they make y sick!

Paul B

Super Soldiers © Marvel Comics

CLANG! CLANG! GET IT OFF ME! GET IT OFF ME!
AAAA

MULTI

MANGA! MANGA! MANGA!

THIS IS THE ONE YOU REALLY NEED TO LOOK OUT FOR!

▸ *Urotsukidoji – Legend of the Overfiend*

Forget Disney. When it comes to animation the Japanese are now kingpins. Actually, that's not entirely true. As I understand it, the finest animation in the world is currently being undertaken in Wales. This work may occasionally turn up on Channel 4 but otherwise you wouldn't know it. The point is, in the commercial mainstream the Japanese are currently in the position of cat-that-got-the-cream. And an amble through the Manga Festival at London's ICA would be enough to convince you of that.

While Disney may be riding high with their schmaltzy *Beauty and the Beast* – a travesty compared to the Jean Cocteau version, so I am led to believe – the stuff that made up the Manga Festival was the real McCoy. No pussyfooting around, there was violence aplenty, a smattering of sex, some great effects and, naturally, some extraordinary animation. Sadly I didn't get to see all the movies on offer, but those I did were, to put it bluntly, the absolute bollocks.

Venus Wars ▾

Now, I needn't go on about the joys of the superlative **Akira**, Katsuhiro Otomo's wonderful adaptation of his own equally wonderful comic. if you haven't seen this yet – then where have you BEEN? – grab a video ASAP because what will confront you is possibly the finest animation committed to film. The story may seem a little confusing, especially if you haven't read the comic, but the sheer beauty of the artwork more than compensates. Placed alongside *Akira* anything else is going to pall somewhat. Nonetheless, there are some other strong contenders that you should search out on video.

Worthy of mention is **Lensman**, based on a series of novels by E.E. 'Doc' Smith, which, I confess, I have never actually read. This is largely *Star Wars* stuff with the young hero bequeathed a Lens by its dying owner, a Lensman. The Lensmen are the frontline troops in a war against the bad guys. The story is uncomplicated and is basically just a great shoot-'em-up epic. There's spaceships and aliens and even a little romance between the hero, Kimball Kinnison – no relation to Sam – and a nurse called Clarissa he meets along the way. In its own not-so-quiet way this is something of an epic helped, I would suggest, by the fact that it was originally written for a Western audience. One of the major troubles I have discovered with these Japanese movies, is the storyline.

A case of point is **Project A-KO**. It's essentially about a girl with apparently superhuman powers and the problems she has with a girl at her new school called B-KO (?). This girl too has super-powers though it's never actually explained how, or even why these girls are so endowed. Maybe the Japanese never ask these awkward questions but it bugged the hell out of me.

No such problems with **Odin** which is set in the future where great sailing spaceships skate along laser beams between planets. The plot is slight – the solar system is being invaded by creatures from another galaxy who were responsible for the old Norse myths – but it moves along at a frenetic pace and there's lots of fighting and explosions and stuff, so you never really notice. There's a smattering of romance and a whole swathe of philosophy at the end which is largely unnecessary but otherwise this is great fun.

Ditto **Venus Wars**. Without wanting to state the obvious, it's about a civil war on Venus, but where this movie scores, like *Akira*, is in its animation which is quite superb. The hero, Hiro, is corralled into joining the military as a desert-biker. There are fast and furious bike-chases, crashes, explosions, and a whole bunch of exquisite hardware for bike- and SF-fans alike. It rips along with bodies and blastings all over the place. You hardly notice that this clocks in at 104 minutes.

But the one you really need to look out for is **Urotsukidoji – Legend of the Overfiend**. This is coming out early next year after it's been hacked about a bit by the film censors. The heroine of the piece, Akemi, manages to get herself raped no less than three times throughout the course of the movie by three different extra-dimensional beasts. This trial she accepts with almost comic degrees of equanimity and stoicism. Maybe, concluded director Hideki Takayama, once she'd been raped once then it didn't really matter much how many times she had to endure the process again.

Now, politically correct this isn't b sad to say, it is actually pretty funny. It not supposed to be but you do emerge with the distinct impression that Japanese women are very much seco class citizens. This is true, but did I sa

GREA

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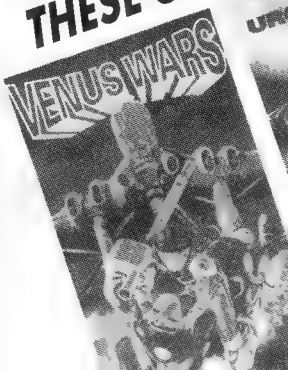
THESE GREAT



MEDIA

'funny'? Well, yes. Until you see the movie you won't understand why it's funny, and I do urge you to see it. It's a rape and pillage movie and there is MUCH pillaging. Blood gushes in profusion, gore in bucket-loads and the creatures are quite spectacular, not to mention voracious in their sexual appetites. It's sick, it's funny – even when it's not supposed to be – and all in all, a kind of mixture of *Alien* and *Police Academy*, in other words, not to be missed.

If you didn't get to the Manga Festival – and congratulations to the ICA for organising the thing – then catch up with any of the above, or the also-featured **Fist of the North Star**, **Tombstone For Fireflies**, **Kiki's Delivery Service**, **Robot Carnival**, **Twilight of the Cockroaches**, **Totoro**, or **Laputa** on video. After all, you've gotta hand it to the Japanese: they know how to string a cartoon together.

Dave Dickson

Right: Odin
Below: Akira

COMPUTERS

Alternative Software released *Dalek Attack* at the end of November, the first release on its new mid price-range Admiral label. *Dalek Attack* isn't the first Dr. Who or Dalek related computer game, but is the first to feature both together – and you get a choice of which Doctor you want to play: Tom Baker, Patrick Troughton or Sylvester McCoy as well as the choice of two assistants, Ace or a UNIT soldier. Faithful old K9 is there whatever the choice.

Dr Who is, of course, Britain's longest running science fiction soap opera, and returned to the screens on November 20 for a regular Friday night slot on BBC2, and the release of *Dalek Attack* comes at a time when more Who product is about to hit the market, including more videos from BBC Video and perhaps even a stage show.

Dalek Attack is a shoot-'em-up arcade adventure featuring Davros and a plot to destroy Earth's ozone layer (as if we're not doing a good enough job...). From their scrolling platform, the Doctor and his assistant have to battle it out with Ogrons, Gorilla men and Robomen before they can even get to grips with Davros and the Daleks.

The object of the game is to travel around the planet, through five levels which takes the player through London, Tokyo, Paris, New York, and finally to Skaro – the Dalek's home planet.

The game comes in most home computer formats including IBM PC. The 16 bit version retails at £16.99, and £7.99 for 8 bit. The package includes a storybook and other collectables.

(Simon Hall)

FREE EXPRESSIONS

Free Expressions **is an art education pack aimed at tutors working with students aged 14-19 and applicable to a variety of subjects and courses.**

There are three units which explore a different human rights theme through the medium of a different art form: 'The Death Penalty and Comics', 'Asylum Seekers and Public Monuments', 'Prisoners of Conscience and Woodcuts'.

The comic section uses discussion sheets, case study exercises and lots of examples from a range of styles and genres, whilst also considering the work of individual creators.

The tone of the text emphasises the importance of comics as a powerful medium and conveyor of ideas, attitudes and pleasure, without being preachy or patronising. The pack, written by Sara Selwood, was produced by *Art and Society* magazine in conjunction with Amnesty International and the now defunct *Crisis* comic, and is still available. Who said comics and politics don't mix. Further details from *Free Expressions Orders*, Amnesty International, British Section, 99-119 Rosebury Avenue, London EC1R 4RE

(Glyn Probert)

MANGA VIDEO COMPETITION!

Now it's your chance to win copies of the videos which Dave Dickson raves about. We've got copies of **Venus Wars** and **Legend of the Overfiend** to give away and all you have to do is answer two simple questions.

Get your answers to us by 15th January 1993 to guarantee your place in the ***Comic World*** special competition hat!

Usual competition rules apply.

① What is Manga?

② What is Anime?

Name_____ Age ____

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THE HISTORY OF CENSORSHIP OF COMICS IN BRITAIN DATES BACK TO THE 1950S AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (HARMFUL PUBLICATIONS) BILL IN 1955, THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO MANY YEARS OF INCREASING CONCERN AT WHAT WERE ORIGINALLY CALLED THE "AMERICAN COMICS" THAT WERE FLOODING THE COUNTRY. THE CAMPAIGN LATER BECAME MORE NARROWED AS

TALES F THE CR

In Every Little Package from Black Magic 15 ▲

Mankiller from Ghostly Weird Stories 1 ▼

Fredric Wertham's* Seduction of the Innocent *has historically been seen as the culmination of Wertham's campaign against what he saw as comics capable of corrupting the young. Violence, subliminal sexual messages, racism and outright obscenity were all to be found in comic books aimed at children, said Wertham. The results of Wertham's erratic and hysterical tirade against comics is well known, the destruction of crime and horror comics in the USA and the foundation of the Comics Code Authority in 1954.

In Britain,* Seduction of the Innocent *was published on 23 February 1955 by the Museum Press, only after the introduction of the Harmful Publications Bill to Parliament on 11 February. Wertham's work was known in the UK and cited by a number of campaigners during the years of campaigning, but the attacks on Horror Comics came about independently in the UK.

"THE WARDEN OF BEMBRIDGE SCHOOL . . . SHOWED SOME TYPICAL COMIC BOOKS 'ILLUSTRATED WITH HALF-NAKED WOMEN' AND THE TEXT IN 'BALLOONS WITH HANDLES'" – FREDRIC WERTHAM

Killer at Large from Ghostly Weird Stories 1 ▼

The roots of the campaign date back to the immediate post-war years, but did not gather steam until 1952. Although not the first to voice unhappiness with "American comics", George Pumphrey, a headmaster at a junior school near Horsham, Sussex, was an early campaigner, having found comics in the possession of children at his school; he published his first article against them in 1948 in the pages of *Teacher's World and Schoolmistress* under the title 'English or American?'. Peter Mauger, a history teacher, was another outspoken critic of the American comics, having first discovered them on a train journey where he was astounded at the concentration – rarely seen in the classroom – of a young boy reading comics. Pumphrey and Mauger were only two of many teachers and clergymen waking up to the 'threat' of comics. Many local campaigns were launched and newspapers began to pick up the threads of a witch-hunt: in 1949 the Reverend Marcus Morris – later famous for his co-creation and editing of *The Eagle* – voiced his fears in an article for the *Sunday Dispatch* entitled "'Comics' that bring Horror to the Nursery", saying "Morals of little girls in plaits and boys with marbles bulging in their pockets are being corrupted by a torrent of indecent coloured magazines that are flooding the bookstalls and newsagents." These papers were being read by "sons and daughters from seven to seventeen", hardly nursery age.

Morris put into words the worries of many individuals and groups. The growing campaign against comics charted by Martin Barker in his remarkable study of the horror comics, *A Haunt of Fears* (Pluto Press, 1984), is highly recommended. Some of the results of Barker's research and his conclusions, however, are worth repeating here. His research, for instance, showed that amongst the first groups to point the finger at American comics were the British Communist Party, of which Peter Mauger and others involved were members. The Communist Party was running an anti-American campaign under the agenda that many aspects British culture were being Americanised: the CP condemned all American culture, and Mauger in particular condemned American comics, in his speech on children's reading habits at the 1951 Cultural Conference and elsewhere.

The involvement of the Communist Party goes some way to explaining why the thrust of the campaign was for many years against "American comics"; as newspapers and other independent groups became more involved the whole campaign became more narrow in its attack, aimed almost solely at horror and crime comics, and the headlines switched from "American" to "Horror".

AN AMERICAN COMIC IN LONDON

The campaign was actually aimed primarily at British black & white editions of American comic books, and British comics in the American format; import restrictions in the post-war years made bringing in the real thing almost impossible.

The trade for British reprint editions (BREs) had grown up soon after the beginning of the Second World War: the American comicbook was very popular in the UK and had been brought across, alongside pulp and film magazines in bulk in the 1930s for sale at Woolworth's and on market stalls. With imports restricted and the major companies cutting down on their output due to the paper shortage, numerous 'pirate' publishers sprang up to take advantage. Paper may have been in short supply, bu children were not!

"HORROR COMICS" CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE MEDIA, WITH QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. THE CAMPAIGN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SPIRITED CORRESPONDENCE IN NEWSPAPERS AND GROUPS SUCH AS THE COMICS CAMPAIGN COUNCIL WERE FORMED WITH AN AIM TO STOP THE PUBLICATION OF COMICS THAT WERE DEEMED UNSUITABLE FOR CHILDREN.

ROM YPT

▲ *From Western Fighters. Note one whole panel has been crudely replaced with balloons.*

The BRE had come about because of the closing of a loophole during WW2: a Midlands publisher realised that the import ban did not extend to newspapers, and was importing Canadian Sunday papers, throwing away the paper and keeping the comic strip section. When the loophole was closed, the publisher imported the printing matrixes and printed his own editions. Thus a whole new industry arose, catering for the young fans of the American comic book and displaced GI's stationed in the UK. There were many publishers involved, producing countless titles, including a number of comics attacked by Wertham in *Seduction of the Innocent*; amongst the titles cited during the British horror campaign were BREs of *Black Magic* (Prize), *Crime SuspenStories* (EC), *Eerie* (Avon), *Ghostly Weird Tales* (Star), *Planet Comics* (Fiction House), *Startling Terror Tales* (Star), *Tales From the Crypt* (EC) and *Vault of Horror* (EC). Probably the two most prolific publishers were Streamline Publications, also known as United Anglo-American Book Co., who produced mostly war and western titles, some of which included their own self-censorship, with some panels removed and replaced with crudely drawn balloons; and L. Miller & Co., best known for reprints of Fawcett publications, including *Captain Marvel* which was to later become *Marvelman*. Leonard Miller's son, Arnold Miller, was head of Arnold Book Company, another prolific publisher of BREs which included the notorious *Haunt of Fear* of which we will hear more shortly.

At the end of the war import restrictions were maintained to help the sterling/dollar balance of payment. The War Loan accepted by Britain in 1946 was not fully paid off until 1959, and all restrictions lifted; in November 1959, National (DC) began exporting their titles to the UK.

THE CAMPAIGN

The attack on "Horror Comics" came to a head in 1954, when a combination of circumstances finally forced the government into action.

It has always surprised me that the campaign took so long to produce results. Even France, where publishing has always been considered far less restricted, had bought in legislation against comics and children's literature in 1947. Canada banned Horror Comics in 1949, and Australia and New Zealand bought in new rules in 1954. Was Britain slow moving? As early as 1951 the Public Morality Council had drawn attention to the 'problem' in England, but no action was taken by the Home Office.

Perhaps one reason why comics may not have seemed such a threat at the time was the appointment of Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe as Home Secretary in 1951. Maxwell-Fyfe led a three-pronged attack on vice which included the witch-hunting of homosexuals, the harrying of prostitutes and a crusade against pornography, primarily in books and magazines, the latter culminating in 1953 when 197 prosecution cases were brought against obscene literature. Some newspapers took up a stand against Maxwell-Fyfe, particularly *The Recorder* in which editor Edward Martell attacked his campaign against obscenity, saying "a book that may have been selling regularly for 20 or 30 years without a word of objection from anybody may suddenly be seized and condemned."

"WE WANTED TO GET BACK TO SOME KIND OF ENGLISH TRANQUILITY . . . AND ANYTHING THAT WAS AMERICAN WAS MATERIAL, AND BRASH, AND VULGAR, AND THAT INCLUDED THEIR COMICS"
– JOE BENJAMIN

The campaign against books lasted until 1954 when a number of cases were dismissed by enlightened Judges who realised that the campaign against obscenity was running into problems: the law needed to be redefined. If murder and bloodshed were 'obscene', Edgar Wallace novels were obscene – and Wallace was second only to the Bible in sales terms. The voice of reason began to make itself felt. The Society of Authors set up a Committee presided over by Sir Alan Herbert to examine the existing laws, and a new Obscene Publications Bill was drafted to embody changes, the principal reforms being to shift the emphasis from 'a tendency to deprave and corrupt' to 'intention', and to take into account the artistic merit in a book. It should not be forgotten that the call for reform only came when five literary publishers were taken to court over hardcover novels – the countless cases against paperbacks and the mass-market publishers were welcomed by many who considered eroticism, under the guise of erotic art or literature a rich man's right. The classic case, of course, was that of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* at which the prosecuting council asked whether it was a book the jury would wish their wives or servants to read? Randolph Churchill, in his introduction to the British edition of *Seduction of the Innocent* seemed to welcome public opinion on the subject of

comics – but particularly "enlightened public opinion as expressed in the correspondence columns of *The Times*."

The campaign against books ground to a halt in 1954 as the number of convictions against publishers dropped. The defenders of books were asking for literary merit to be taken into account, and that the work as a whole had to be read and considered rather than a judgement be made on the titillating extracts read out in court. Books were bad news to prosecute.

Re-enter the comic. Where pornography and obscenity were subjective, as the difficulty in prosecuting books had proved, the Perversion of Our Children may have seemed a far easier target. In May 1953 a meeting of the National Council for the Defence of Children (later the Council for Children's Welfare) was called by Dr. Simon Yudkin, a consultant paediatrician at the Whittington Hospital, London; Yudkin had seen horror comics being passed from bed to bed by children in hospital felt that a more co-ordinated campaign by the numerous small groups would put greater pressure on the government. Out of the meeting came the Comics Campaign Council, chaired by Mr. A.H. Holloway, and with George Pumphrey as its chief publicist. Pumphrey's *Comics and Your Children* was published in 1954, selling over 3000 copies.

The campaign against comics was fuelled by numerous articles in the media: Kingsley Martin wrote a piece in the *New Statesman* (September 1954) entitled "Sadism for Kids", and on 17 September a letter from Pumphrey was published in the *Times Educational Supplement* in which he attacked the Arnold Book Company for publishing a comic entitled *Haunt of Fear* (it was, in fact, made up of EC reprints from *Haunt of Fear 23* and *Shock SuspenStories 14*). Barker, who interviewed Pumphrey in 1981, quotes him as saying: "It is not too much to say that when I first saw it, I was delighted. I said to myself – this is it, they have gone too far, this is something the campaign can really use".

> *"THE COMICS SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN MADE ILLEGAL. THEY WERE SCAPEGOATS FOR OTHER WORRIES. DEFLECTED IDEOLOGICAL CONCERNS MADE DEMONS OUT OF PIECES OF PAPER"*
> *– MARTIN BARKER*

With the campaign against books behind them, other papers picked up Pumphrey's lead: *Picture Post*, *The Daily Worker* and *The Daily Dispatch* were just three of many papers to report on the publication of *Haunt of Fear*; the Ministry for Education (Special Services Branch) contacted Pumphrey to borrow the comic and the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency contacted many campaign bodies and M.P.s which led to a question in parliament. All this, as Barker points out, over one comic.

The acceleration of the campaign after September 1954 was to lead directly to action by the government. In the autumn of 1954 the Comics Campaign Council had a Bill drafted by lawyers which was presented to the then new home secretary, Lloyd George, who would later accept a deputation from the Church of England Education Council led by the Archbishop of Canterbury on 12 November.

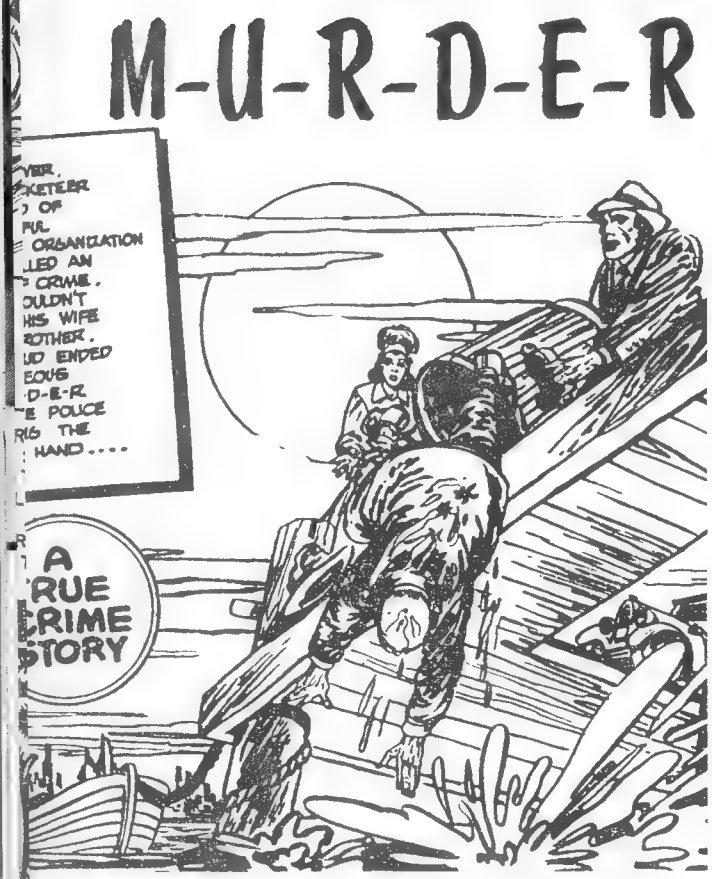
Another pivotal group involved during this period was the National Union of Teachers (NUT). There had been 14 motions submitted for debate about comics raised at their annual conference in 1952, but there was no great activity until the NUT opened a display of horror comics in London on 11 November 1954 to create public awareness of them; it was widely attended by the public and the media, later moving to the House of Commons before touring the country.

The NUT had formed a committee, but a study of their records shows that they were fairly inactive until October 1954 when the exhibition of comics was mooted and put together very quickly. Barker implies that the sudden burst of activity was due to the fact that the NUT were just about to enter a wage negotiation, and needed to be seen as vital to the moral well-being of our nation's children.

The campaign, as seen by Barker, had narrowed its outlook, moving from specific allegations against crime and horror comics until towards the end the media seemed full of emotive but essentially meaningless phrases: 'Drive Out the Horror Comics' and 'Now Ban This Filth That Poisons Our Children' were just two of the headlines of the day, but there was little evidence outside of repetitive accusations to show exactly what was 'perverted', 'filthy' and 'degrading' about any particular title. However, 'public opinion' was outraged: the tabloids were full of anti-comic hysteria and the no doubt 'enlightened' Randolph Churchill was writing that the course of action was for the Director of Public Prosecution to initiate actions against publishers who "enrich themselves at the expense of the minds of young children. If the magistrate or judge should prove to be so illiterate as to fail to punish the defendant, then will be the time to consider an alteration in the law."

There is good reason for him to write thus: to attack individual titles, which was the aim of many, would have required specific charges being brought. Under the laws of the time they would have had to be bought under the Obscene Publications Act then under review and which even the Home Secretary admitted had itself become perverted by judicial decisions: the word 'obscene' was almost wholly restricted to matters relating to sex, and it was unlikely that a successful prosecution could be brought on horror or crime comics which, whilst violent, could hardly be accused of being sexually pornographic (except to Wertham, who could see sex in the shadow of a man's shoulder blade).

Since the horror comics were not unlawful, the campaign thrust became to change the law and *make* them unlawful. This meant government legislation, which the government was slow to take. Churchill's blinkered attitude (only an illiterate judge would fail to punish the defendant??) and formulaic brandishing of horror comics as obscene contained the same ingredients as all pressure groups use to whip up support: generalise about their 'filthiness' (by late 1954 nobody dared deny that the horror comics were filthy, but nobody could pinpoint the exact nature of their filthiness other than to extract single frames or parts of frames which generally supported the idea that they were violent and unwholesome, as Wertham had); imply that their publication degraded the minds of children and turned them into monsters (the case most often cited during the British campaign was that of Alan Poole who shot a policeman and was himself shot resisting arrest in 1952;



▲ *Hideous Murder from Startling Terror Tales 1*

▲ *"In ordinary comic books there are pictures within pictures for children who know how to look." – Can you spot the hidden picture?*

Poole was reported as having a library of comics that ranged from the generally reported 50 to a social worker's estimate of 300. The truth was revealed in a parliamentary debate – Poole possessed *one* comic, a western); imply that they are published by shameless men who reap a vast profit from producing sordid material aimed at the defenceless minds of children and distributed by equally callous vendors (e.g. headlines such as "Still Cashing in on Muck"); imply that "all those men and women who want their children to grow up kindly, decent human beings are joining in" (and by implication that inaction would damn them to a future as unkindly, indecent human beings); ignore evidence to the contrary (a contemporary study by the Committee on Maladjusted Children chaired by Lord Underwood did not mention comics as being a cause for maladjustment or disturbance in children); isolate the argument about comics from other contemporary issues – e.g. the witch-hunting of publishers of 'obscene' books, the rise of Teddy Boys; and, lastly, never let a redeeming feature sway you from your argument (in most of the crime and horror comics under consideration there was always a morality in that the worst guys always came to the stickiest end, although this is probably the most subjective argument used in pro-comics campaigns)

HARMFUL PUBLICATIONS BILL

The situation in late 1954 made it impossible for action *not* to be taken: the Home Secretary, Major Lloyd-George, had received a draft proposal from the Comics Campaign Council and the NUT exhibition and calls for action had whipped up the House. The result was the publication of the Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Bill on 11 February. The Bill was introduced on 22 February and consisted of two proposals:

1. *This Act applies to any book, magazine or other like work which consists of stories told in pictures (with or without the addition of written matter), being stories portraying:-*
   (a) the commission of crimes; or
   (b) acts of violence and cruelty; or
   (c) incidents of a repulsive or horrible nature;
   in such a way that the work as a whole would tend to corrupt a child or young person into whose hands it might fall (whether by inciting or encouraging him to commit crimes or acts of violence or cruelty or in any other way whatsoever).
2. *A person who prints, publishes, sells or lets on hire a work to which this Act applies, or has any such work in his possession for the purpose of selling it or letting it on hire, shall be guilty of an offence and liable, on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding four months or to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds or to both.*

The Bill was met with a lot of opposition, although a great deal of the debate was more concerned with clarifying the position of newspapers such as the *News of the World* and the *Empire News* which (according to M.P. Michael Foot) were pornographic and made vast sums of money for their publishers. There was also the argument that the Bill's aims were not clear, that it retained the Hicklin rule of "tendency to corrupt" which at the same time was under attack from the Herbert Committee Bill which hoped to clarify the problems with obscene publications, and that it was vague. A picture-spread about war in *Picture Post* could well fall into the bounds of the Bill.

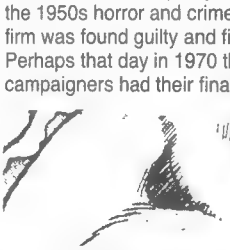
However, the Bill was given a second reading and referred to a Committee where there would be an opportunity to amend. The Committee opened its discussions on 24 March, ending on 29 March, and whilst numerous amendments were suggested, only two accepted: that all proceedings under the Bill were to be undertaken with the consent of the Attorney-General, and that the Bill was limited to a ten year duration. When the Bill reached the House of Lords there were further amendments which protected vendors who could prove that they had not read the contents of a work or had no reason to suspect that it was one which could be charged under the Act and that the new law limited its scope to publications "of a kind likely to fall into the hands of children or young persons". With these amendments it became the Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act 1955.

SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO THINK OF THAT - THAT THING AS OUR SON. HE FRIGHTENS ME -- HE FRIGHTENS THE WHOLE VILLAGE--
MY POOR WIFE-- IF I COULD ONLY TELL HER THAT HE IS NOT OUR CHILD - BUT. SOMETHING UGLY AND INHUMAN!
HE GAVE HIS OWN CHILD IN EXCHANGE FOR THE MOST TERRIFYING OF ALL CREATURES

AFTER THE ACT: A POSTSCRIPT

How many cases have been bought under the 1955 Act? To my knowledge only one. The Horror campaign had effectively destroyed the horror comics before the Act was passed. Speaking in February 1955, Sir Hugh Linstead, M.P., said that the two main firms that had been printing and publishing horror comics (Thorpe & Porter of Leicester and Cartoon Art Publications of Glasgow) had stopped publications of this sort and it was now virtually impossible to buy any horror comics. They had been hounded out of existence already.

The end of the Horror Comics era meant that no test cases could be bought under the Act – no doubt the reason why the Act was renewed ten years later without discussion and is still in force. The one known case was against L. Miller & Co., who had produced so many BREs in the 1950s. Ironically, the new Miller comics were partly reprints from the 1950s horror and crime titles, and the firm was found guilty and fined £25. Perhaps that day in 1970 the campaigners had their final revenge... CW



◀ *Answer to spot the picture: competition – a hidden naked woman!*

THUS ENDED THE ROTTEN CAREER OF MATHEW DURKIN, CHICAGO'S YELLOW RAT. IRMA WENT TO JAIL FOR LIFE, WHERE, A BROKEN WOMAN, SHE WAITS FOR THE SANDS OF HER LIFE TO RUN OUT....
CRIME NEVER PAYS!

THE COMIC World READERS POLL

As this is the first issue of 1993 we're instigating the COMIC WORLD READERS POLL, your chance to nominate your choice of the best in comic books for 1992. All you have to do is fill in your nomination for each catagory on this form or a copy, and send it to COMIC WORLD READERS POLL, 89 EAST HILL, COLCHESTER CO1 2QN, to arrive no later than Friday 26th February 1993.

Voting is open to all readers of COMIC WORLD, and the extended deadline should allow overseas readers the chance to vote as well.

If you don't want to vote in any particular category, leave a blank, but please vote for only one winner in each category.

We're offering a prize to the first five voting forms received, even if you're not voting in some sections,

SO GET VOTING.

UK SECTION

Best ongoing title	:
Best one-shot/graphic novel	:
Best limited series	:
Best story in a single issue	:
Best artist (pencils)*	:
Best artist (inks)*	:
Best writer	:
Best colourist**	:
Best letterer	:
Best editor	:
Most promising new title	:
Most promising newcomer (writer)	:
Most promising newcomer (artist)	:

US SECTION ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best ongoing title	:
Best one-shot/graphic novel	:
Best limited series	:
Best story in a single issue	:
Best artist (pencils)	:
Best artist (inks)	:
Best writer	:
Best colourist**	:
Best letterer	:
Best editor	:
Most promising new title	:
Most promising newcomer (writer)	:
Most promising newcomer (artist)	:

*since most British comics are drawn by a single artist, one overall nomination will be accepted for a Best penciller/inker.

**nominations can include artists who produce fully painted artwork.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ANSWER SOME SIMPLE QUESTIONS, and send the completed questionnaire in to *Comic World* at 89 EAST HILL, COLCHESTER, ESSEX CO1 2QN. We're offering free subscriptions to the first ten questionnaires we pull out of the hat. Just make sure your forms get to us by 15 January 1993, and if you want to go into the draw, don't forget to include your name and address!

HEY! WIN A FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO COMIC WORLD!

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1 ☐ Are you a regular reader of *Comic World?*
☐ or do you buy only certain issues?

2 **Where do you buy your copies?**
☐ Specialist comic shop
☐ Mail order
☐ Newsagent, Smiths, Menzies
☐ Subscription

3 **Have you ever responded to an advert? Was it for:**
☐ Back issues
☐ Current issues
☐ Hot recent issues

4 **How much do you spend on comics per month?**
☐ Up to £10
☐ £10–£20
☐ £20–£30
☐ £30+

5 **Would you consider yourself to be:**
☐ a reader of comics
☐ a collector of comics
☐ an investor in comics

6 **Are you currently buying comics from the following companies?**
☐ Marvel
☐ DC
☐ Image
☐ Dark Horse
☐ Valiant
☐ Tundra
☐ Fantagraphics
☐ Independent companies (Innovation, Malibu, etc)
☐ 2000AD
☐ Small press

7 **Do you also regularly buy any of the following?**
☐ Movie magazines
☐ Models
☐ T-shirts
☐ Posters
☐ Videos
☐ Trading Cards
☐ SF Books
☐ Computer Games
☐ Role-Playing Games

8 **Which of the following types of features would you like to see in *Comic World*?**
☐ New and current characters (e.g. Ghost Rider, Sandman, etc.)
☐ hero histories of classic characters (Superman, X-Men)
☐ modern US creators (McFarlane, Lee)
☐ classic US creators (Kirby, Ditko)
☐ modern UK creators (Bolland, Bisley)
☐ classic UK creators (Bellamy, Hampson)
☐ humour creators (Aragones, Baxendale)
☐ classic newspaper strip creators (Raymond, Foster)
☐ TV/movie tie ins (RoboCop, Star Trek)
☐ market reports (movement of back issues, prices of 'hot' titles)
☐ collector's information (tips on storage, restoration)

9 **Are there any regular features you would like to see in *Comic World*?**

INVISIBLE PEOPLE 1–3

by Will Eisner, Kitchen Sink, $3.95

In the 1940s Will Eisner created 'The Spirit' comic strip for newspapers' adult audience, and with it invented comics language pretty much as we know it today. In 1978 he returned to the industry to pioneer modern graphic novels with *A Contract With God*, drawn from his Depression upbringing.

Eisner has been criticised for not updating his visual references from his youth, and wisely backdates these three stories to that time, but his continual concerns now seem alarmingly modern – homelessness, social deprivation and the big-town anonymity that perpetuates them (the series is dedicated to a real 'invisible woman' – noticed only in death).

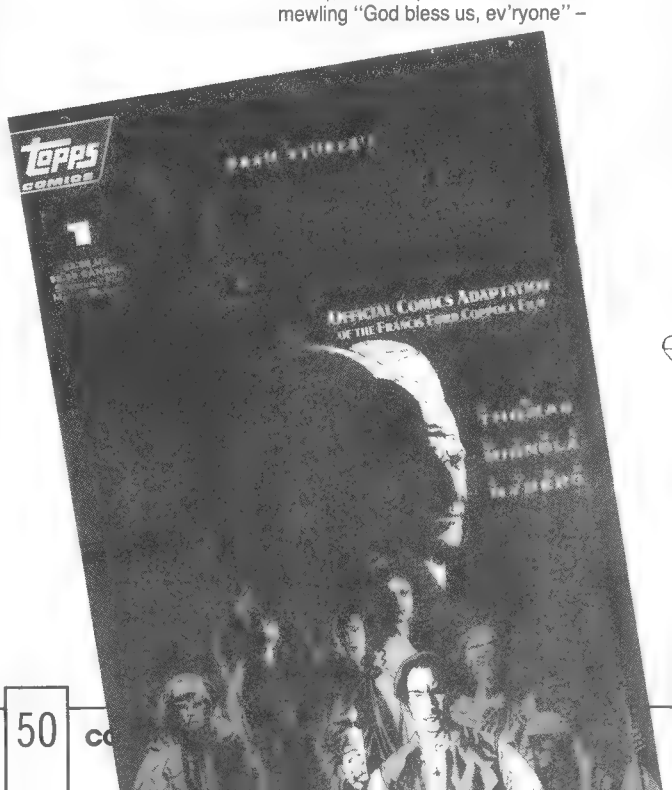
It's true that Eisner's characterisation can be melodramatic and his writing heavy-handed, but for comics storytelling he wrote the book! In particular see the way he designs each page as a unit, and breaks down time into panels. A character reading bad news would be just a single flat image from others; here it becomes a page-long ballet where each panel has it's own note to play.

While lesser artists fill their stories with gone-tomorrow youth and flash, Eisner peoples his with the lonely, the middle-aged and overweight, the nobodies you pass every day – and makes it more gripping than anybody.

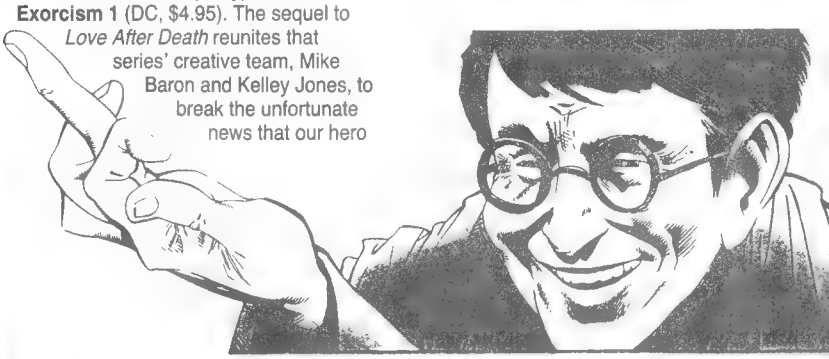
(Gavin Burrows)

SHORT REVIEWS

Sorry to bother you with this, but Evil never rests, not even over Christmas: fortunately this means all you adventure fans won't have to endure a sudden influx of sugary slush. No sign in **Bram Stoker's Dracula 1** (Topps, $2.95), for example, of some little kid mewling "God bless us, ev'ryone" – plenty of vampires though. This is just one of a range of licences tying in with Francis Ford Coppola's forthcoming movie adaptation (following the usual tortuous, not to say daft, logic of modern merchandising practices, you can also get the a brand-new novelization of the film of the novel). The ubiquitous Roy Thomas, responsible for who-knows-how-many adaptations over the years, delivers a script in his usual earnest style, while Mike Mignola's stark, open compositions use silhouette to great effect. Inevitably some trading cards are included, promoting the set. It's a sign of the times that a company such as Topps should be moving into the comics business, but at least this comic's more tha just an appendage for the cards.



In a similar vein (sorry) is **Deadman: Exorcism 1** (DC, $4.95). The sequel to *Love After Death* reunites that series' creative team, Mike Baron and Kelley Jones, to break the unfortunate news that our hero has seriously lost it. Jones' wracked Deadman gnaws at the reader's sympathies, while Baron's deadpan wit plays with the restless mood of the story rather than defusing it.



On the face of the evidence in **Fantastic Four 371** (Marvel, $2.00), Sue Richards, the Invisible Girl, could give Deadman a few pointers when it comes to throwing a wobbly: she certainly appear to be two issues short of a complete set at the moment. As if that wasn't enough, after all this time the poor woman's been squeezed into the standard Marvel Vamp costume of thigh-length boots and precious little else: a less cynical era has finally passed. As unlikely twist piles upon surreal development – Johnny's wife (the one who masqueraded as Alicia for a while) returns as (uh-oh) Lyja the Lazer-Fist – the issue exerts a strange fascination. A

WS

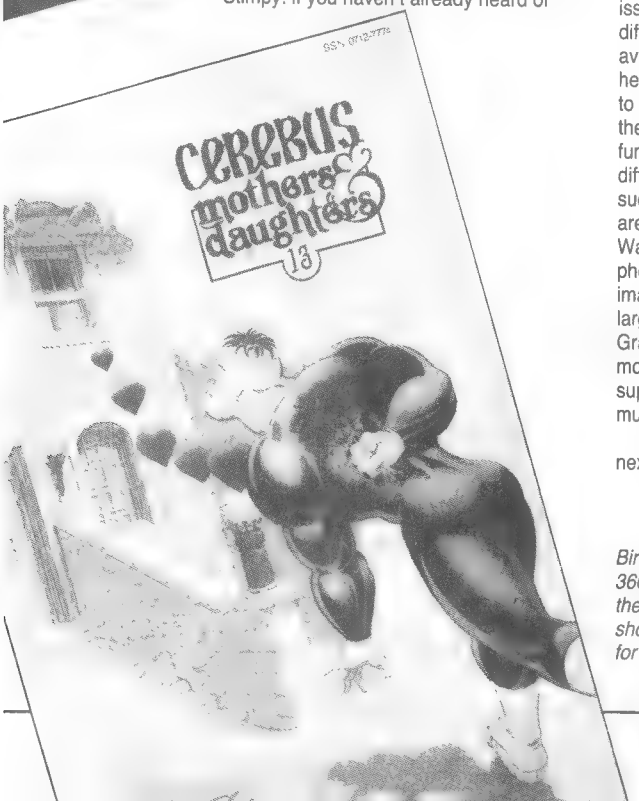
plain white embossed cover adds to a vigor born more out of desperation than inspiration.

Orion 1 (Dark Horse, $3.95) packs even more in: if you've read any of Masamune Shirow's other work, such as *Appleseed* or *Dominion*, you'll be familiar with the way it overwhelms you with so much information that this is one rollercoaster ride you need to go round a few times. Concepts of Eastern mysticism and mythology crash violently into the laws of science. The scale of Shirow's scenario is huge, dwarfing the lives and concerns characters for the time being.

Warren Ellis and D'Israeli takes us on an equally rich but ultimately more involving flight of fancy in **Lazarus Churchyard: Goodnight Ladies** (Tundra UK, £2.95), into a world of New Age technology – virtual worlds and designer drugs. Especially the drugs. Ellis' dialogue and D'Israeli's images are equally graphic. The characters are less cyberpunk than cybergoth, by turns silver-tongued and foul-mouthed. The art is effervescent: some people's work can suffer from paper this glossy, but these acid colours were made for it.

Another thoughtfully crafted world lies in the pages of **Cerebus 163** (Aardvark-Vanaheim, $2.25). For Dave Sim to attempt such a huge project (just past the halfway point and still on course to finish early next millenium) suggest that he, like Sue, needs to plug those vital gaps in his collection, but the reader gets a treat out of it. Sim combines traditional comic imagery like funny animals and superheroes (the latter in scenes far more pertinent and amusing than the batch of cash-in spoofs of Marvel doing the rounds at present) with his own takes on religion and feminism. Few comics require more effort to get into; fewer still offer these rewards.

Two only slightly more conventional anthropomorphic characters are Ren and Stimpy: if you haven't already heard of



them, they're the stars of a cult cartoon on American cable tv. All we've seen over here is the odd T-shirt, but now the inevitable comic licence has arrived. In **The Ren & Stimpy Show 1** (Marvel, $2.25), the duo succumb to temptation and embark on a crime spree that terrorizes America (don't try this at home, boys and girls). Can anything stop them? Thanks to Mike Kazaleh's vibrant artwork springing across the pages, you'll enjoy finding out. Marvel's sales boost gimmick for this issue, which along with the bag adds a dollar to the cover price, is a scratch 'n' sniff card, but as it's billed as a "Free! Air Fouler", you'll forgive me if I turn my nose up at it and move on.

Despite the predominance of airhead vigilantes in comics, it's reassuring to know that it's still easy to find a selection of titles as varied as this month's if you care to look, and **Fast Forward 1** (DC/Piranha Press, $4.95) doesn't let the side down. Looking at the cover, you may not be too sure if the title of the series is *Phobias*, but in fact each issue of the anthology will have a different sub-title. *Fast Forward* strives to avoid the limitations of genre. The stories here rely on prose more than illustration to bear the storytelling chores: quite often the images serve only a decorative function. This is perhaps due to the usual difficulty in telling a fully-rounded story in such a small space. The first two strips are the most successful. In 'A Glass Of Water', Dave McKean's visuals, more a photo-strip than a piece of illustration lack imagination but sound the right note, largely through their use of colour, for Grant Morrison's elegiac monologue. The more inventive drawings of Glenn Barr support Andrew Helfer's funny and true musings on the illogicality of Man flying.

Have a good Christmas: see you next year.

(Richard Hill)

Review copies courtesy of Birmingham's Fantastic Store (021-643 3667). Where a price is quoted in dollars, the sterling rate may vary slightly from shop to shop. Thanks to Steve and Edge for their help and patience this year.

SMALL PRESS

***Nevers Edge 2**, 40pp, £1.00, from Chris Webster, 396 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AW*

Chris Webster previously wrote and drew the excellent zine *Outcasts* (well before DC used that title). This is the second part of the story so I've missed out. Missing teenager, masked vigilante psycho, and many other shady goings on fill these pages. As I say, I'm at a bit of a disadvantage because I've not seen part one but Chris does his best and I'd certainly like to see more from him. Well worth buying.

***The Chronicles of Ullah 1**, 28pp, US size, £1.10, from Magpie Graphics, 149 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 4AX*

Fiona MacColl and Rick Innis write while David Gordon draws in a rather scratchy but nice art style. Set on Ullah, and all that entails, it leaves one thinking of the early *Redfox* and it was to fill the void left by *Redfox* that our triumverate of fantasy started the comic. Issue 2, with a colour cover and same price, etc., has more scratchy artwork and it seems to have been rushed and my advice is: take it

slow. There's a good story and people will wait a little to see the next part. With Lord Girth lusting after Blythe and an interesting sub-plot with Helene and her mother I want to see more. This is a *must buy*.

***No Holds Barred Magazine 2**, 64pp, £1.20, D. Sale, N.H.B., c/o Greenleaf, Box 18, 82 Colston Street, Bristol*

I've seen this zine in a couple of Bristol shops so decided, somewhat foolishly, to buy a copy. An 'interesting' colour cover which indicates that the people involved spent a good few quid on this. Quality typesetting and printing inside which means it should be okay? Not really. *NHB* features 'stories pictures poems comic strip art + more' we are told but I am sorry to say that the text was too over-heavy and a trial to read at A5 (digest) and the artwork had no saving graces to it whatsoever as far as I am concerned. If there *is* one saving grace it comes in the form of two cartoons by 'David' which look great but not quite so funny; it would have been better to let David fill the issue with his own work.

As always, I ask the reader to remember that what I may not like they may love. *Don't* be put off by a bad review from me. Self publishing is *essential* in today's world where hype and bucks tend to push aside talent or even giving us a choice of what we want to read. So, support those small pressers!

(Terry Hooper)

Warheads © Marvel Comics UK

run to as varied a selection as Mignola, Kaluta, Klimt, Geiger, The pre-Raphaelites, Art Nouveau and Art Deco. He's against being open simply to influences from comics.

"I think people in comics tend to talk about comic influences, and seem to ignore films and stuff . . . I think you should be open to any kind of influences – even music. The lyrics of a song can give you the idea for a story or character."

Despite the Moebius project being on hold, Dave has certainly got plenty of work in the pipeline. At this year's UKCAC, he was contacted by Pirahna Press and DC with offers of work. This also means a busy time for his fiancee, Victoria – an artist in her own right, she has coloured some of his works in the past.

Any ambitions left?

"I'd love to work on a Fantastic Four story. It would lay a ghost to rest. It was one of the first comics I ever bought. It would be like completing a circle."

And what would he advise budding artists to do?

"Just carry on sending stuff off. That's how I got a job: just being persistent."

(Kev McCready)

DAVE TAYLOR

Dave Taylor's work has got originality and soul. Like most of the new crop of British artists, he's certainly took his time to arrive. He is now in the enviable position of regular work and a chance to break himself on a world stage by working with one of the world's greatest artists. As they say on* Blue Peter*, more on that later.

But how did he get into comics? "From a very early age," he says, "I was always drawing Disney characters, stuff like that. Copying from books and comics. And then buying comics, mid-teens . . . all old stuff . . . Kirby, *Fantastic Four*, old stuff like that."

As with most of us, mere mortals couldn't even get near the offices of D.C. or Marvel: "Comics were drawn by people from another planet as far as I was concerned. Humans weren't doing them. So how do you get into that business? I suppose, over the years, I realised there was a possibility of working in the industry. Someone's got to do it. Why not me?"

Through the trusty route of UKCAC, small press and perseverance, Dave eventually struck lucky. Marvel wanted someone to work on an *A-Team Annual*. Unfortunately (or fortunately, considering the subject matter) this never saw the light of day.

As we'll find out later, he has a passion for the works of Moebius. It was a strange combination of his admiration for him and The A-Team, that got Dave his first "proper" job.

"Being into Moebius, I got really into his Western stuff. I'd done some sample illustrations, sent them off to Steve White at Marvel UK. About a month later, he rang me up and said can you come down to London, we've got a job for you."

This was seven months work on Zorro. Eventually he found his way into Marvel's new title, *Overkill*.

"When Gary Erskine left, they phoned me up and asked could I do a fill-in issue." Dave has since become the proverbial jobbing artist for *Overkill*. He's done everything from background work to a 22 page Motormouth/Kill Power strip in a recent issue.

Back to Moebius. Dave is a confirmed fan of his eclectic, yet individual style. Where did it start?

"I think it was 'The Horny Goof' in *Heavy Metal*, about 1978. It was so different from what I'd been reading and trying to draw. It was as if someone was drawing what I wanted to read. He's got so many different approaches, yet it's him. That freedom to express yourself in different ways, to me is incredible."

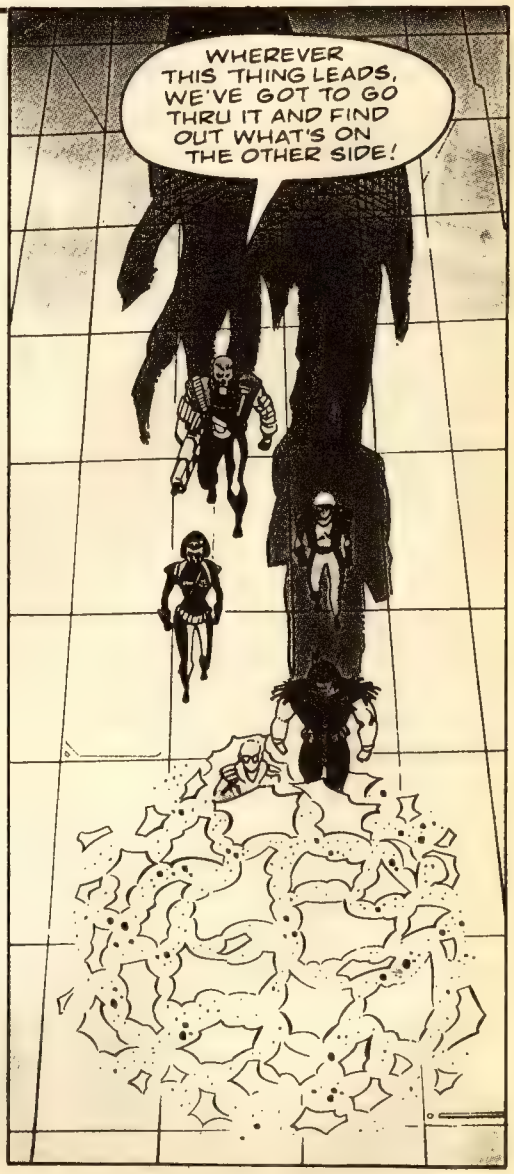
Eventually, he sent some samples to Jean-Marc Lofficier and got a reply: "He wrote back to me with a postcard, saying he'd like to work with me on a Major Grubert story. I didn't know what to make of it. Whether he was being completely mad, friendly or what."

There was only one way to find out. He went to a convention. In the bar, Moebius was sampling our infamous warm English beer. He confirmed that, YES, he did want to work with him. Sample pages followed. This has led to Dave being involved in Marvel's mouth-watering Moebius project.

"The outcome is that Marvel in America is printing a spin-off of *Airtight Garage* stuff. Cam Kennedy's doing one, so's Jerry Bingham. And they're going to reprint *The Airtight Garage* in comic form.

"I was going to take over on the fourth set of books. But because of the market, they're holding back till the very last minute. So it's going to be August '93 before anything comes of that."

Besides Moebius, Dave's influences



ALAN WHO?

Steve Tanner
Rheinhahlen

Dear Comic World,
I have recently been privy to much brow-furrowing and shaking of heads following the Image announcement of Alan Moore's return to comics with *Spawn 8*. The puzzled actions have invariably been followed with maudlin and indignant comments along the lines of selling out and making a fast buck. We seem to be in the throes of a dour re-write of The Prodigal Son, the happy ending being scrapped and replaced with the son being told to clear off again sharpish until he bucks up his ideas. Once again, we fans do one thing whilst proclaiming another.

That Alan Moore is wasted on superheroes is irrefutable, that the only way he can continue to follow his chosen profession without exchanging his house for a shoe box and selling his family to organ-leggers is by tramping back through a field already muddied by the masses is somewhat depressing. Moore may well have been ready to take comics in new directions, but the majority of us were certainly not. The majority of us (and by 'us' I do include myself) buy *X-Men* and *Batman* by the lorryload and are quite content that we occasionally dip a nervous toe into something which doesn't boast capes, cowls and KER-RRUNCH!!! This somewhat damning statement to my fellow fans is borne out by the sales figures – if we were truly ready for the next generation of the comic-strip would we not be ignoring the foil, embossed, holografix and (good grief) movement enhanced veneers for spit and sawdust, glossy cover, black and white titles that are always being 'quoted' as prime examples of the state of comics today in conversations with baffled friends and confused loved ones?

Comics are in the ghetto, but it's our fault for being such atrocious landlords – we just don't like it when somebody tries to move out into a better district. Moore tried to move into more palatial quarters with *A Small Killing*, 'Lost Girls' and 'From Hell' but the majority of us seemed not to be interested and now seem dubious about letting him have the key back to his former bed-sit.

However, this is the wonderful world of comic books so we will soon renege, sales of *Spawn* will skyrocket as the speculators move in and everyone will be happy again. Everyone that is, I imagine, apart from Moore, no doubt close to tears with frustration at his enforced U-turn due to his selfish desire not to starve. One gets the impression that his decision to return to superhero comics with his embracing of the Marvel-style scripting is no more than an attempt of dignified bravado and a reluctant taking of a very stubborn bull firmly by the horns – a case of Moorehammed going to the mountains as the mountain looks very unlikely to go to Moorehammed.

Such gloom and doom I know, and also such cavalier, broad, sweeping generalisations of comic fans, but I am referring to majorities rather than minorities – a liberty I hope will either be forgiven or provoke lively debate. Personally, the majority of comic books I buy each month are superhero books and of the 100 or so titles I get regularly no more than a smattering are outside this norm. However, I seem to be one of the minority who buys *Taboo*, *Cages*, *Hate* and comics by Crumb, Bilal, Schultheiss and so on, yet I am also one of the majority who bought the Impact titles!

Alan Moore wasted on superheroes? What about Marvelman, Watchmen and *The Killing Joke*? That aside, I agree that as usual the negative comment and creator-backlash arrives long before anybody has seen the comic. Who's to say that *Spawn 8* won't redefine the whole Marvel/Image-style superhero comic genre same as *Swamp Thing* redefined the walking-heap genre. Don't forget that Moore was only with DC about four years, and it's longer than that since *Watchmen* came out; a whole new generation of fans has arrived not knowing who or what all the fuss was about. Maybe Alan's about to become the darling of Image fans, although there's always the chance that they'll double bag their copies and still never know what they're missing...

Are comics still in the ghetto? Yes, maybe they are. But they always will be, same as 'literature', because most people want easy-to-read, easy-to-understand novels and comics. They – we – want more of the same. It wasn't only Alan Moore who left *Swamp Thing* at issue 64. But *X-Men* survives any number of personnel changes...does that mean they have stronger characters, or more understanding fans who are willing to give the new guys a chance? The two most successful and acclaimed graphic novels of all time are almost certainly *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen*. But were they so radically different? Weren't they just good stories using two of the oldest comic book conventions – masked vigilante (and a well known one at that) and superheroes?

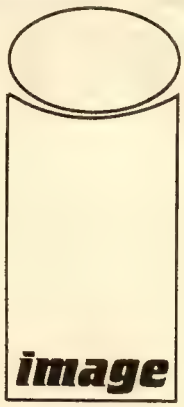
The ghetto, the bit of the big world of art we live in, is full of superheroes. We made that bed in the forties, and remade it in the sixties – made it so well that almost every other sub-category fell by the wayside.

So what have we got to whine about? Superheroes are the bread and butter of the comic industry, and fourteen year-olds double-bagging *Youngblood* will subsidise six issues of *1963*. Everyone buying a Batman or Superman title is making sure that Sandman will continue to be published. So don't knock superheroes – some of them have strange, wonderful friends that you might like to meet!

STOP PRESS

IMAGE COMICS ESTABLISHES FULL SERVICE COMPANY

Just as we go to press, we have received news that Image Comics have split from Malibu Comics. Image announced the news in the following press-release:



Los Angeles – Image comics expanded its role in the comic world by bringing in-house all aspects of its production including marketing, distribution and finance it was announced today by interim chief, Cheri Liefeld.

When Image was created a year ago, the partners signed with Malibu Comics for their initial product distribution and marketing. When all books ship in March 1993, just one year after its inception, Image will become a separate entity. In describing the move, Liefeld states, "Malibu played an integral role in helping Image set-up shop. Image is now ready to run with the ball itself and wishes Malibu the best success in its continuing endeavors."

Image, who shook up the comic world last year by luring away seven super-star artists whose pens accounted for many of the biggest selling comics ever at industry giant Marvel, has garnered accolades for its highly successful and innovative new comics *Youngblood, WildC.A.T.S., Spawn, Brigade* and *Shadowhawk*. The books have generated several million dollars in sales, even forcing long-time industry leader D.C. Comics from second to third place in the market.

The company's dynamic core is composed of Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, Todd McFarlane, marc Silvestri, Jim Valentino, Erik Larsen and Whilce Portacio. Image will be based in Southern California. The focus of the company will remain fan-oriented while creating new departments in the areas of promotion, distribution and finance. Cheri Liefeld will be overseeing the transition.

In a joint statement, the company's principals emphasized that, Image Comics will continue producing the high quality product that fans have come to expect from them. "Assuming the position of publisher, will allow Image to be more directly involved in every aspect of the books promotion and marketing," states Rob Liefeld "which we feel is key to Image's continuing success – we have some very exciting things coming in '93."

"This is the natural evolution of our departure from Marvel," adds Jim Lee. "Now, we not only own our characters, we get to control the destiny of the company we created as well. I am excited by the new venture. It gives us the ability to promote and publish other creator-owned titles and to oversee the entire creative and marketing aspects." Todd McFarlane agrees, "Will this change Image – yes! 1992 was just a start, in 1993 we will be in high octane."

Image plans to double its comic output in 1994 adding several new additions to their already successful line as well as creating numerous spinoffs from their "hot" existing comics. Creative Artists Agency, Inc. (CAA) will represent the artists and their properties for movie and licensing deals, with several already in the works. Image will also be launching a toy-line based on one of its existing titles in the very near future. In addition, 1993 will see Image venture into the foreign market with its entire line of comics being reprinted throughout Europe.

THE COMIC MASTERCLASS IS A SERIES OF ARTICLES FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO WANT TO BREAK INTO THE BUSINESS. THERE HAVE BEEN BOOKS IN THE PAST DESCRIBING THE MECHANICS OF LAYING OUT A SCRIPT AND DRAWING HOUSE-STYLE ARTWORK, BUT FEW THAT OFFER PRACTICAL ADVICE ON WHAT AN EDITOR ACTUALLY WANTS TO SEE. OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WE WILL BE SPEAKING TO THE PEOPLE WE FEATURE PAUL NEARY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF MARVEL UK WHO ANSWERED OUR QUESTIONS ON WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS ABOUT SUBMISSIONS, AND WHAT ARE THE THINGS TO AVOID . . .

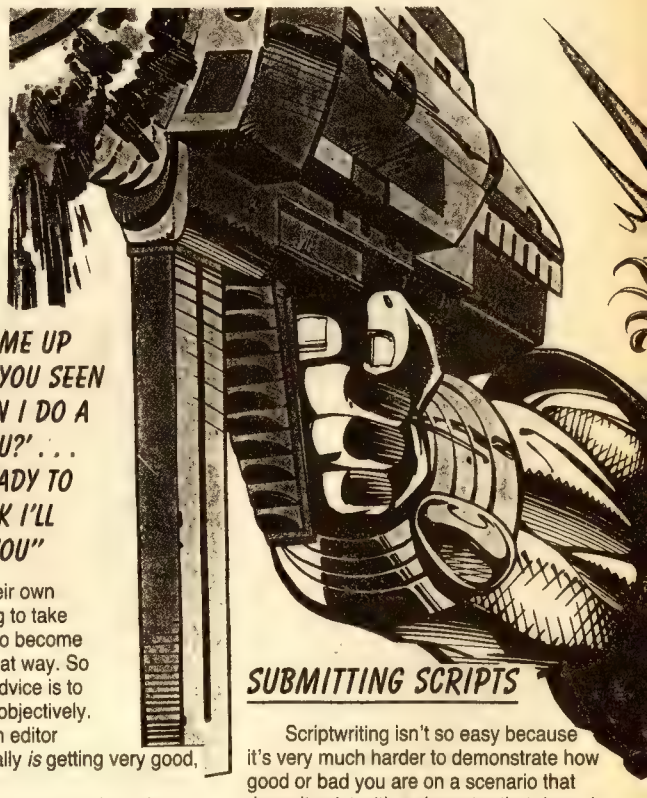
FROM THE HO

There are plenty of things to avoid. It's in two parts, really: the way you go about creating a character, and the way you go about presenting it to the person concerned. I'll deal here with what sort of thing comes onto my desk...

Every morning when I come into the office there are usually ten or fifteen packages. The drawing is much easier to evaluate than the writing for the obvious reason that it only takes a matter of seconds to scan artwork to tell whether it's going anywhere or not. That's not the hard part: the hard part is the insistence that people have about following it up. That's where it gets difficult for me. People often ask for an in depth reply, an analysis of what they're doing, and send me a self-addressed envelope which, in all conscience, I feel guilty about throwing away because the reply is almost always the same thing: basically you need to do more work on your style, become better and approach me when the drawings bare some relationship to the drawings that are being published. Quite often they don't, and that's really all I have to say when I reply.

My advice to newcomers is always, go back, look at your favourite artist, realise that most people in the industry heavily base their style on two or three other artists, and for the most part at the beginning of their career you can tell that. You can look back at established creators now and say 'I didn't realise that this person was so influenced by that, or that, or that'.

It drifts away as you become more experienced, but basically most artists learn by looking at the work of other artists. Some artists want to re-invent the wheel, and come in with drawings that are undeniably their own style, but it's going to take them a long time to become good enough in that way. So the first piece of advice is to look at your work objectively. Don't approach an editor until your work really *is* getting very good, and don't be ashamed about copying other people's work. To blend other artists work into your own style is the normal way to proceed.



"DON'T CALL ME UP AND SAY 'HAVE YOU SEEN MY WORK? CAN I DO A STRIP FOR YOU?' . . . IF YOU'RE READY TO START WORK I'LL CONTACT YOU"

Personally I would like to say by all means send in your work, but don't expect a long reply, and don't call up and say 'Have you seen my work? Can I do a strip for you?' I *have* seen it – I do open everything – and if you're ready to start work I'll contact you.

Cartoon art by Dave M. Windett

Killpower © Marvel Comics UK

SUBMITTING SCRIPTS

Scriptwriting isn't so easy because it's very much harder to demonstrate how good or bad you are on a scenario that doesn't exist with a character that doesn't exist; it's much harder for writers to break in than artists.

It's very hard to sit and read big scenarios that go on for page after page – sometimes I get 400 page scenarios with all new characters!

The only way you *might* attract my attention is to pick up on what we're already doing in a book – say, *Dark Angel* – and write in to me, a little letter that says

'You haven't done this with her yet, here's a plot: she meets person B and does thing C and this opens up area D between her and MyS-TECH.'

Now, if I saw that in two sentences it's possible that immediate contact might be made.

So, for writers trying to make contact, it's a matter of thinking about the character that's involved and trying to get someone's attention. But, as I said, a great rambling scenario very rarely gets the attention it deserves because I've only got a quarter of an hour to look through the morning mail.

Here's another DON'T: this morning I received a submission about a character that we already have. Unfortunately the number of frames used is all wrong. The first page has 10 frames, the second has 5, the third has 7, then it speeds up – 10, 13, etc.

I don't know *why* it was written like that, but it's so odd that it makes me worried. It should have been a script for an eight page story and it should have 5 or 6 panels on each page. Also the writer has written the panel descriptions down first, and when you've finished them you get all the dialogue, so it's a major work of cross-referencing to see what's happening.

There are certain things I can read from that: firstly that he hasn't seen any scripts – he should have done that first before he started. I would probably send his a script now which shows the way things are written – panel descriptions and suggested dialogue all in the same place*. If he'd done that it's possible, being a six or eight page script that I might have read it through.

But from what I can make of it it was pretty well unacceptable on two other counts: it was a mood piece which we tend not to do, and it was about the reconciliation between two characters that we've broken up as part of the story.

In this case, the script broke several rules. It tried something different with characters we've established, and despite the fact that Marvel are well known for their action comics, he decided to write an eight page romance story which is probably enough to get it refused on its own.

That's just one example – I might get ten like that every day!

So – think about the characters and what they do. Superhero characters for the most part are action characters with a little bit of background framework but not much else. For the most part we're looking for an action story, and even more generally we don't have long, rambling plots: we have stories about characters.

If you're proposing a new character to Marvel you have to say what the character is, what's special about them and what sort of situations he or she are going to be involved in. But do it briefly. Do it *very* briefly. The quality of the character has a great deal to do with how it's received in comics, although some extremely generic characters, if they're drawn beautifully and written well, will hold their own in comics. On the other hand, if a very interesting character is drawn or written badly it won't make the grade. You could take the most ridiculous of the four or five new characters that came across my desk this morning and if you gave it to Alan Davis to draw it would be fine. On the other hand you could spend all your life thinking up the world's most perfect superhero, and if it was drawn or written badly it would be a laughing stock.

**Don't flood the Marvel offices with requests for scripts! If you want to see a sample script we have some at* Comic World *which are available for an SAE sent to us at 89 East Hill, Colchester, Essex CO1 2QN.*

DURABLE CHARACTERS

A lot of stuff being proposed we could make a go of, but what we try to do is to make a durable character, a character who looks good whoever draws it and whoever writes it: if you have a strong character with its own identity it tends to survive good and bad treatment. The character has got to stand up, so firstly you are trying to create with obvious character traits. Killpower, for instance: the reason that I gave him the mind of a child was that I thought we were going to be duplicating The Punisher and all the other kick-ass heroes if we didn't do something strange with him; basically he does everything a mother figure tells him, and he's got an incredible set of powers, but he's just a child in his head.

"THINK OF THE CHARACTERS AND WHAT THEY DO. SUPERHERO CHARACTERS FOR THE MOST PART ARE ACTION CHARACTERS. . ."

There's something there that differentiates him from The Punisher, say. We attempt not to duplicate whatever else is going in the Marvel universe, but because there's so much stuff there already, it's hard. You can end up with composite characters like Psylocke, who's a mixture. Psylocke started out as a fairly generic character who has now got this ninja tag bolted onto her original character, and she's got a psychic sword now which makes her more of an action figure. She's a character who has evolved into something much stronger. Another big plus was that she was drawn by Jim Lee for a long time, so it's a mixture of things

NO, JULIUS! CALM DOWN - I WASN'T GOING TO HURT YOU! MUMMY WOULDN'T HURT HER LITTLE BOY! BELIEVE ME!
I'LL NEVER BELIEVE ANYTHING YOU TELL ME EVER AGAIN!
GUARDS! GUARDS!!

that makes a character as successful as it is. It's hard to quantify and give a straight list of things to do. All of the things we've talked about are really necessary to make a character take off.

NEW CHARACTERS

Marvel America's approach, and to a certain extent our approach here at Marvel UK, is that if we want a new character we turn to someone with a track record. It tends to be evolved by people around the office when we're talking about it, or after work over a drink. Suddenly an idea will come up, and then, say, Liam [Sharp] will draw a rough, or one of the other artists who comes in every day will hear about it, make a drawing and we have the beginning of something. That's what tends to happen.

It's not easy to break into that network, and what makes it doubly difficult is that everything that's being read by fans who would like to write for us is three or four months behind what our thinking is here. We've had three months more to think about everything than the average fan has, so they're at an enormous disadvantage because we've already moved on from what they're reading; the ideas that come in are based on something that's three months old and we've already gone off at a tangent. Most of the story ideas they're working on can't happen because we've done something different – the following issue we've had this bust up or that character dies. Whilst we can, to a certain extent, know something of the ability of a person to write, the chances of being able to use the story itself are pretty well zero.

THE FIRST RUNG

One of the ways that we recruit people is that they already know someone who is already doing work for us, and they're recommended: someone whose work I respect as an artist sometimes says 'My friend and I have been writing scenarios for years, would you have a look at his stuff?' It's word of mouth, that one – friends of people who are working in here already, who are relatively well read in comics and are quite intelligent in themselves. We will often give them a chance and persevere with them a little bit – not that it always works out.

A guy called Craig Houston sent in some stuff – I was first asked to look at his work by an artist we had working for us called Stuart Jennett. Michael Bennent [editor at Marvel UK], had picked up on him at the same time from a different angle, just through him being peripheral to the business. I looked at the stuff and thought that whilst the scenario he sent in was quite derivative of *RoboCop 2*, at the same time the dialogue on top was quite sharp.

I've been in plotting sessions around here where we've worked out a nice plot only to be let down by the dialogue. The fact that this guy can dialogue quite well was interesting to me and we've since actually asked him to do stuff for us [*Death Rattle*, due July]. In the back of my mind I was thinking 'Make the plot right and Craig can then dialogue it'. I know his dialogue is great, we'll see how his plotting comes along – and he's then underway. But his dialogue attracted me to start with. He's an example of paying someone a little more attention because someone has said 'He's a friend of mine, would you look at it?'. If someone hadn't asked me to watch out for him I might have just skimmed down it and not taken that second longer that counted.

So working through the fan network and up through the ranks of the fan network to the point where you get to know people working semi-professionally or people who have done one or two jobs; you meet this bloke in a pub and the next thing you know... Climbing through the ranks that way and handing things on through friends of friends who are in contact with us on an irregular basis, that's probably a better way of doing it than just mailing stuff in.

Also there's another thing that sometimes works – comic shops. Comic shops are a magnet for fans and we went to a signing where they asked us to look at the work of a guy who was local to them. He's sent things on a couple of occasions since, and I recognise it now when it comes in. That's sort of opened the account.

CW

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COMIC classifieds

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ABBREVIATIONS

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M.	Mint Perfect
N.M.	Nearly Mint
V.F./V.F.N.	Very Fine
F.N.	Fine
V.G.	Very Good
G.	Good
F.	Fair
P.	Poor
B.S	Bookshop Stamp on Cover
T.S.	Taped Spine
R.S.	Rolled Spine
M.C.	Marked Cover
W.B	Water Bent
P.S.	Price Stamp

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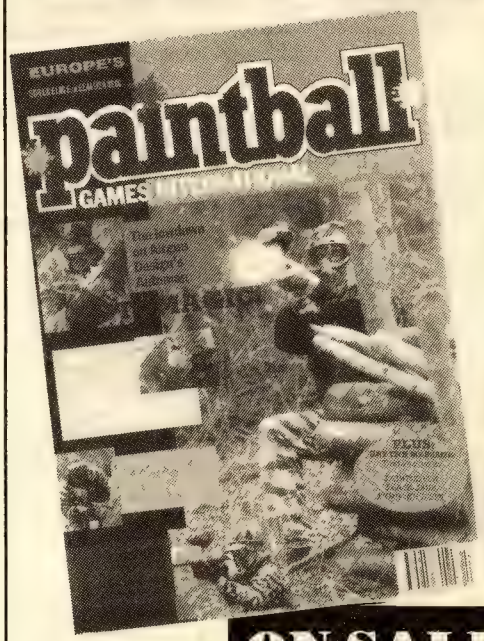

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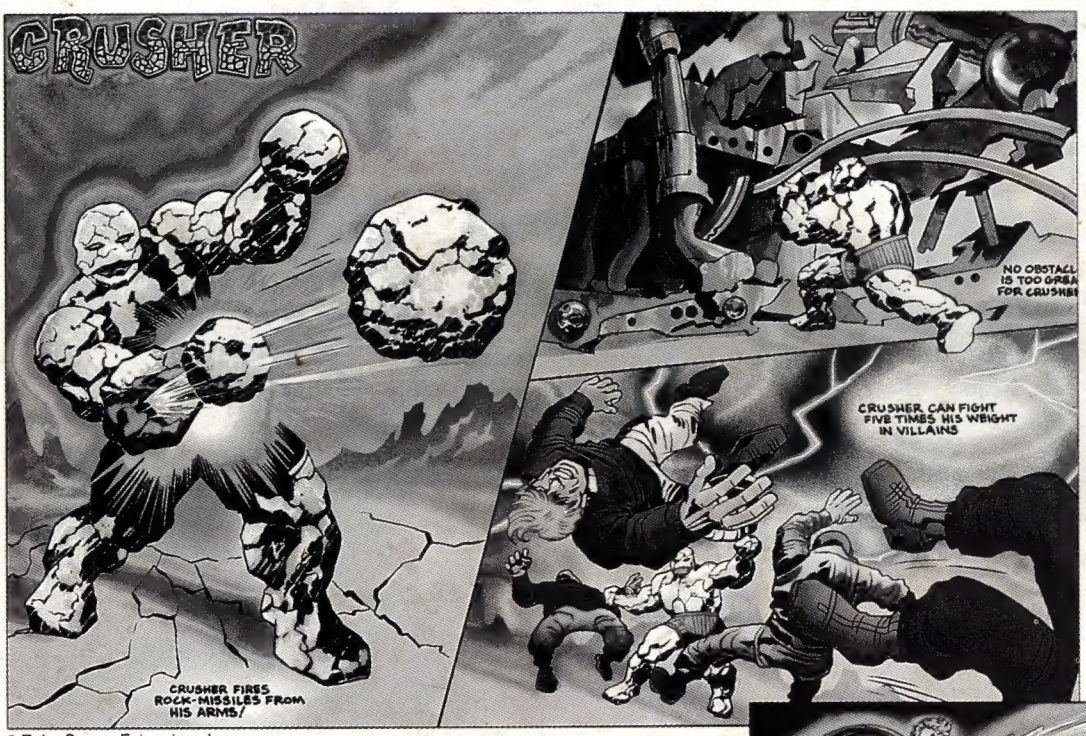

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